

THE HOLY QUR-ĀN

ENGLISH TRANSLATION & COMMENTARY

(With Arabic Text)

BY

A. YUSUF 'ALI



PARTS I—XV

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"Your translation, as expected, has exceeded all expectations as regards its
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DEDICATION

To all who love and reverence the Book,
And earnestly strive to find in it,
Not a reflection of their own fancies,
But a clue to Unity, Discipline,
And the Call to higher matters of the spirit,
I dedicate this humble effort at Interpretation,
The fruit of my Life, Thought, and Study.

'ABDULLAH YŪSUF 'ALI,
(Servant of Islam).

CONTENTS

	PAGES
Dedication	iii
Preface	v—viii
Commentaries on the Qurān ...	ix—xiii
Translations of the Qurān ...	xiv—xv
Useful Works of Reference ...	xvi
Transliteration of Arabic Words and Names	xvii
Abbreviations used	xviii
Punctuation Marks in the Arabic Text	xix
Divisions of the Qurān ...	
Introductory Commentary :	
God's purpose with Man	C. 1—6
The light of His Revelation	C. 7—10
The Voice of Unity	C. 11—15
Muḥammad	C. 16—21
His Mission	C. 22—31
His first Disciples	C. 32—34
The Task before him	C. 35—39
The Qurān	C. 40—41
Sūra I : <i>Fātiḥa</i> ... ..	... 13—15
Introduction	C. 42—43
Text and Notes ... ..	... 14—15
Sūra II : <i>Baqara</i> —	
Summary	15—16
The Message and the Men	C. 44
Text and Notes, ii. 1—29	16 17—23
Man's Nature and Destiny	C. 45
Text and Notes, ii. 30—39	23—24 24—26
The Children of Israel :	
Their privileges and backslidings	C. 46
Text and Notes, ii. 40—86	26—27 27—40
People of the Book :	
Their jealousy and narrow-mindedness	C. 47
Text and Notes, ii. 87—121	40 41—51
Abraham and Ismā'il built	
the Ka'ba and founded Islam	C. 48
Text and Notes, ii. 122—141	51 51—56

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CONTENTS OF PART II

Sūra II: <i>Baqara</i> —(contd.)	PAGES
Creation of a new people, with Qibla towards Mecca 	C. 49 ... 57
Text and Notes, ii 142—167 ... ..	... .. 57— 65
Laws for this new people, about food, blood- money, bequests, fasting, jihād, pilgrimage, charity, drink and gambling, orphans, marriage, divorce and widowhood	C. 50 .. 65
Text and Notes, ii 168—242 . ... ...	... ... 65 — 96
Fighting in defence of Truth and Right: Story of David and Goliath	C. 51 .. 96
Text and Notes, ii 243—253 . ... ...	... .. 96—100

CONTENTS OF PART III

Sūra II : <i>Baqara</i> —(Contd.)	PAGES.
Nature of God : the " Verse of the Throne " : No compulsion in religion : Upright conduct : Abraham : Charity : Usury :	
Contracts : Witnesses	C. 52 ... 101
Text & Notes, ii. 254—283 ... ...	... 101—115
All life as in presence of God : No burden greater than we can bear : Prayer to God	C. 53 .. 115
Text & Notes, ii. 284—286 ... ...	... 115—117
Appendix I, On the Abbreviated Letters ... ...	... 118—120
Sūra III : <i>Āl-i-'Imrân</i>	
Introduction & Summary ... ...	... 121
Confirmation of previous Revelations : Acceptance of Faith	C. 54 ... 121
Text & Notes, iii. 1—20 ... ...	... 122—127
Partial Truths, and the Completed Book of God : Friendship with one's own people	C. 55 .. 127
Text & Notes, iii. 21—30 ... ...	... 127—130
Apostles form one Brotherhood : Birth of Mary, Yahyâ and Jesus	C. 56 ... 130—131
Text & Notes, iii. 31—63 ... ...	... 131—139
Seek common principles, avoid dissembling and disputing : True Religion	C. 57 ... 139
Text & Notes, iii. 64—91 139—146

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CONTENTS OF PART IV

	PAGES
Sūra III : <i>Āl-i-'Imrān</i> (Contd.)	
Text & Notes, iii. 92—120	147—154
God's help will come to those who strive, as at Badr : We must learn from our misfortunes, as at Uḥud C. 58	154
Text & Notes, iii. 121—148	154—160
Dangers of indiscipline, disputes, loss of courage, or pursuit of selfish ends : Glorious are the martyrs without fear C. 59	160—161
Text & Notes, iii. 149—180	161—170
Vain are the taunts of Unbelief : God's promise is sure : Trust in Him C. 60	170
Text & Notes, iii. 181—200	170—176
 Sūra IV : <i>Nisāa</i>.	
Introduction & Summary	177
Unity of mankind ; Sacredness of sex and family relationships ; Women and orphans ; Distribution of property after death C. 61	177
Text & Notes, iv. 1—14	178—183
Crimes against sex to be rooted out : Marriage and women's rights : Live in faith, charity, and kindness C. 62	183
Text & Notes, iv. 15—23	183—186

CONTENTS OF PART V

Sūra IV : *Nisāa* (Contd).

Text and Notes in 24—42

PAGES

107 102

CORRECTION SLIP

Part I, 1st edition, p. 53, verse 128, please add after 6th line :

And turn unto Us (in Mercy);

Part II, 1st edition, p. 57, line 2, for *vv.* 142—167 please read *ii.* 142—167.

Part II, 1st edition, p. 94, *v.* 235, after 6th line please read :

But do not make a secret contract
With them except in terms
Honourable, nor resolve on the tie
Of marriage till the term
Prescribed is fulfilled.
And know that God
Knoweth what is in your hearts,
And take heed of Him;
And know that God is
Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing.

Part III, p. 134, substitute the following for *iii.* 42 :

42. Behold ! the angels said :
“ Oh Mary ! God hath chosen thee
And purified thee—chosen thee
Above the women of all nations.”³⁸²

Part III, p. 136, for *iii.* 52, 6th line, read :

“ We are God's helpers :

Part IV, p. 170, *iii.* 180, for the 6th line, substitute the following two lines :

Nay, it will be the worse
For them : soon shall the things

CONTENTS OF PART V

Sūra IV : *Nisāa* (Contd).

		PAGES
Text and Notes, iv 24—42	..	.. 187—193
Cleanliness, purity, truth, obedience, and other virtues lead to glorious spiritual Fellowship	C. 63	... 193
Text and Notes, iv 43—70	...	... 193—201
Rights and duties of Brotherhood : fear nothing, maintain the right, and guard against Hypocrites and Deserters	C. 64	... 201
Text and Notes, iv 71—91	...	201—208
Sacredness of life : migrate from places hostile to Islam : precautions in prayer in time of danger	C. 65	... 208 - 209
Text and Notes, iv 92—104	...	... 209—214
Treachery and secrecy to be avoided : firmness and faith to be encouraged	C. 66	... 214
Text and Notes, iv 105—126	...	... 214—219
Justice to women and orphans and to all : be true and considerate	C. 67	... 219
Text and Notes iv 127—147	...	220 226

CONTENTS OF PART VI

Sūra IV : <i>Nisāa</i> . (Contd.)	PAGES
Text and Notes, iv. 148—152 ... ..	... 227—228
Where the People of the Book went wrong : Revelation continued in the Qurān	C. 68 ... 228
Text and Notes, iv. 153—176 ... ..	... 228—236
Sūra V : <i>Māida</i> .	
Introduction and Summary ... ..	... 237
Obligations and duties, human and divine, are sacred and inter-connected : laws of food and social intercourse	C. 69 ... 237
Text and Notes, v. 1-6 ... ..	... 238—242
Cleanliness and purity ; justice and right con- duct ; trust in God	C. 70 ... 242
Text and Notes, v. 7—12 ... ..	... 242—244
How God's grace was withdrawn for falsity to trust and rebellion against truth	C. 71 ... 244
Text and Notes, v. 13—29 ... ..	... 244—250
Jealousy of Cain against Abel led to murder : crimes against individuals and com- munities	C. 72 ... 250
Text and Notes, v. 30—46 ... ..	... 250—256
Justice above men's selfish desires : be not afraid to proclaim the truth of God : keep away from evil, but recognise the sincere and the humble, even if not of your flock	C. 73 ... 256
Text and Notes, v. 47—85 ... ..	... 256—268

CONTENTS OF PART VII

Sūra V : *Mā'ida* (Contd.).

	C.	PAGES
Text and Notes, v. 86—89		269
Avoid excess, rash vows, drinking, gambling, and superstition	C. 74	269
Text and Notes, v. 90—111		269—277
Miracles of Jesus, but he claimed no divinity	C. 75	277
Text and Notes, v. 112—123		277—281
Appendix II, on the <i>Taurāt</i>		282—285
Appendix III, on the <i>Injīl</i>		286—287

Sūra VI : *An'ām*

Introduction and Summary		288
God reigns in heaven and on earth : there is a Hereafter	C. 76	288
Text and Notes, vi. 1—30		289—296
Life of this world is empty ; what is serious is the Hereafter : God holds the keys of the unseen	C. 77	296
Text and Notes, vi. 31—60		296—304
God's loving care encompasses us ; it is His protection we should seek, and not that of any one else	C. 78	304—305
Text and Notes, vi. 61—82		305—311
Revelation in all ages ; Qur'ān a blessing and confirmation ; Signs of God in the daily pageants of Nature	C. 79	311
Text and Notes, vi. 83—110 — —		311—322

CONTENTS OF PART VIII

Sūra VI : *An'ām* (Contd.).

	C.		PAGES
Rebels against God are deceived and deceive each other : let us trust in God	C. 80	.	323
Text and Notes, vi. 111—129 ... ..			... 323—327
Degree in good and evil deeds : avoid superstition and excess	C. 81	.	327
Text and Notes, vi. 130—150 .. ...			... 327— 334
God's commands are not irrational taboos, but based on moral law	C. 82	.	334—335
Text and Notes, vi. 151—165			335—339

Sūra VII : (*A'rāf*).

Introduction and Summary .. .			340
Revelation should ease difficulties of heart and mind : arrogance and excess at the root of evil	C. 83	..	340
Text and Notes, vii. 1—31			341— 347
God has forbidden evil : all good is for man's enjoyment : Righteous to live in Peace and fulfilment of all Hope	C. 84	.	348
Text and Notes, vii. 32—58			348—357
Noah, Hūd, Šālīḥ, Lot and Shu'aib : how their wholesome warning was rejected, to the detriment of the rejecters	C. 85	...	357
Text and Notes, vii. 59—87 . . .			. 357—366

CONTENTS OF PART IX

Sūra VII : *A'rāf* (Contd.)

	PAGES
Text and Notes, vii. 88—99 	367—370
Moses had to fight alien arrogance as well as rebellion among his own people, like the final Apostle whom he prefigured C. 86 ..	
Text and Notes, vii. 100—157 	
The Apostle's Revelation superseded the older Law C. 87	
Text and Notes, vii. 158—171 	
The inborn good in man is strengthened by constant reminders from God ; if sin has a respite, it is only for a term ; Judgment must come ; so draw near to God, in humility and reverence C. 88 .. 393	
Text and Notes, vii. 172—206 ... ..	... 393—402
Appendix IV : Egyptian Chronology and Israel ... ..	... 403—407
Appendix V : Egyptian Religion and its steps towards Islam ... ..	... 408—413

Sūra VIII : *Anfāl*.

Introduction and Summary 	414
The Fight is not for Spoils or gain, but for the Cause C. 89 ...	414
Text and Notes, viii. 1—19 	415—419
Obey God's Call, and hold all else as naught : the godless will not thrive C. 90 ...	419
Text and Notes, viii. 20—37 	420—424
The Battle of Badr differentiated Truth from Unbelief : its lessons C. 91 ...	424
Text and Notes, viii. 38—40 	424

CONTENTS OF PART X

Sūra VIII : *Anfāl* (Contd.).

	PAGES
Text and Notes, viii. 41—64 ... ..	... 425—431
The true man is not cowed down by odds against him : he fights not for spoils, but for truth and faith	C. 92 ... 431
Text and Notes, viii. 65—75 ... ..	... 431—435

Sūra IX : (*Taubā*, or *Barāat*).

Introduction and Summary ... ..	... 436—437
If the enemy treacherously breaks faith, de- nounce his treaty, but give time before declaration of war : Mosques are for men of faith	C. 93 ... 437
Text and Notes, ix. 1—29 ... ..	... 438—447
Enemies of Faith cannot put out God's Light : wealth is for good use, not for hoarding : strive and struggle for God in a straight fight	C. 94 ... 447
Text and Notes, ix. 30—42 ... ..	... 447—453
Believers do their duty and make no excuses : alms are for poor and needy and not for hypocrites : bliss of the righteous is in the Good Pleasure of God	C. 95 ... 453
Text and Notes, ix. 43—72 ... ..	... 454—461
Hardest striving needed against Evil : welcome all chance of service and sacrifice	C. 96 ... 461
Text and Notes, ix. 73—93 462—468

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CONTENTS OF PART XI

PAGES.

Sūra IX : *Tauba*—(Contd.).

Text and Notes, ix. 94—99	469-470
The vanguard of Faith expect their reward in God's Good Pleasure : God's grace is free and abounding : even the erring obtain it by repentance ...	C. 97	..	470
Text and Notes, ix. 100—118 ...	...	...	470—477
Truth in word and deed is our fullest satisfaction and reward : our striving should include study and teaching, for our brethren ...	C. 98	...	477
Text and Notes, ix. 119—129 ...	...	...	477—480

Sūra X : *Yūnus*.

Introduction and Summary ...	...	...	481-482
God guides the human spirit in wondrous ways, if man will have Faith and put his trust in God : man is one ...	C. 99	...	482
Text and Notes, x. 1—20 ...	...	...	483—489
All things good, beautiful, and useful are from God : instead of ephemeral good seek the eternal Home of Peace from God through His Book ...	C. 100	..	489
Text and Notes, x. 21—40 ...	...	...	489—495
The Truth of God must not be shut out of our souls : Revelations and Prophets are sent to teach us : we must accept them and reject falsehood ...	C. 101	...	495
Text and Notes, x. 41—70 ...	..	...	495—502
God works in His world in Mercy and Justice : repent before it is too late ...	C. 102	...	502
Text and Notes, x. 71—92 ...	...	...	502—507
Be patient and strive with constancy : God's Plan is righteous, and for the good of His creatures ...	C. 103	...	507-508
Text and Notes, x. 93—109 ...	...	...	508—512

Sūra XI : *Hūd*.

Introduction and Summary	...	...	...	513
Ungrateful man folds up his heart and forgets how all nature points to God and the Hereafter : God's Message is the Light that leads and the Mercy that forgives	...	...	C. 104	513
Text and Notes, xi. 1—5	...	...	...	514

CONTENTS OF PART XII

PAGES

Sūra XI : *Hūd* (*Contd.*).

Text and Notes, xi. 6 - 24	...	...	515—519
Noah loved his people and taught and warned them, but they flouted his message : God's justice overtook them, but he was saved from the Flood in the Ark	C. 105	..	519
Text and Notes, xi. 25—49	...	...	519—527
The 'Ād were warned against their sins by Hūd, and the Thamūd by Šālīḥ, but they defied God, and were wiped out	C. 106	..	527
Text and Notes, xi. 50—68	...	...	527—532
The angels, on their mission of justice to the people of Lūṭ, stopped to give Good News to Abraham : the people of Lūṭ persisted in their abominations and perished, and so did Madyan, Shu'aib's people, for their fraud	C. 107	...	532
Text and Notes, xi. 69—95	..	...	532—540
The same lesson is taught by the arrogance of Pharaoh, who misled his people : learn and seek Mercy	C. 108	...	540
Text and notes, xi. 96—123	...	...	540—547

Sūra XII : (*Yūsuf*).

Introduction and Summary	...	..	548—549
The beautiful story of Yūsuf : how envy and hate made his brothers sell him for a small price	C. 109	..	549
Text and Notes, xii. 1—20	...	...	550—556
He was bought by a dignitary of Pharaoh's Court : the wife of the dignitary burned with earthly passion and brought him into trouble : but he remained true and righteous	C. 110	...	556
Text and Notes, xii. 21—42	...	..	556—566
He eventually became ruler of Egypt, and fought a famine in the service of the people : his brothers came, not knowing him	C. 111	...	566
Text and Notes, xii. 43—52	...	..	566—570

CONTENTS OF PART XIII.

PAGES,

Sūra XII : *Yūsuf*—(Contd.)

Text and Notes, xii. 53—68 ... 571—576

Joseph asked his brethren to bring Benjamin
with them next time ; by a stratagem
he made the brethren confess their past
guilt ; he forgave them, and sent for his
father ...

C. 112 ... 576

Text and Notes, xii. 69—93 ...

... 576—584

Joseph's father Jacob comes to Egypt, and the
whole family are re-united honourably ;
so God's Plan works for good ...

C. 113 ... 584-585

Text and Notes, xii. 94—111 ...

... 585—591

Appendix VI : Allegorical Interpretation of the Story of Joseph ...

... 592—600

Sūra XIII : *Ra'd*.

Introduction and Summary ... 601

Nature proclaims the glory of God ;
Lightning and Thunder are Signs of
His Might as well as of His Mercy ...

C. 114 ... 601

Text and Notes, xiii. 1—18 ...

... 602—609

Those with Faith are like the seeing, and
those without are like the blind ; God's
promise never fails ...

C. 115 ... 609

Text and Notes, xii. 19—31 ...

... 609—613

Men may mock, but God's Truth will come
to its own : the world's plots have no
power to defeat it ...

C. 116 ... 613

Text and Notes, xii. 32—43 ...

... 614—617

Sūra XIV : *Ibrāhīm*.

Introduction and Summary ... 618

Revelation leads from darkness to light :
apostles must prevail : Truth is as a
goodly tree, with firm roots, spreading
branches, and perennial fruit ...

C. 117 ... 618

Text and Notes, xiv. 1—27 ...

... 619—627

Evil tries to mislead : the godly should be
on their guard : Abraham's Prayer ...

C. 118 ... 627

Text and Notes, xiv. 28—52 ...

... 628—634

Sūra XV : *Hijr*.

Introduction and Summary ... 635

God will guard His Truth, and is the
Source of all things : He is Eternal ...

C. 119 ... 635

Text and Notes, xv. 1 ...

... 636

CONTENTS OF PART XIV

PAGES

Sūra XV : *Hijr* (contd.)

Text and Notes, xv. 2—25 ... ..			... 637—642
Man's lowly origin ; his rank raised by the breathing of God's spirit into him ; Gates of Evil are many, but the goal of Good is Peace	C. 120	...	642
Text and Notes, xv. 26—50 ... ..	...		... 642—646
God's Grace and Mercy are always first, but His Justice and Wrath will seize those who defy His Law	C. 121	...	646
Text and Notes, xv. 51—84 ... ..	...		... 646—651
God's most glorious gift is the Qur-ān : denounce sin, but be gentle and kind	C. 122	...	651
Text and Notes, xv. 85—99 ... ..	...		... 651—654

Sūra XVI : *Nahl*

Introduction and Summary ... ..			... 655
Signs and favours innumerable guide man to God, but arrogance misleads	C. 123	...	655
Text and Notes, xvi. 1—25 ... ..	...		... 656—662
The plots of the wicked end in shame ; the Penalty comes in unexpected ways ; for nature proclaims God	C. 124	...	662
Text and Notes, xvi. 26—50 ... ..	...		... 662—669
God is One : He provides man with all the means for growth, social, moral, and spiritual	C. 125	...	669
Text and Notes, xvi. 51—83 .. ..	...		... 669—679
Apostles will witness against men who reject Truth : be faithful in intent and action	C. 126	...	679
Text and Notes, xvi. 84—100 ... ..	...		... 679—683
Give up pride of worldly good : God is with those who live in self-restraint a pure and righteous life	C. 127	...	683—684
Text and Notes, xvi. 101—128 ... ..	...		... 684—690

CONTENTS OF PART-XV.

Sūra XVII : *Banī Isrā-il.*

			PAGES.
Introduction and Summary	...	...	691-692
Men of God instruct men, but each soul has personal responsibility ; God's gifts are for all, but not the same for all	...	C. 128	692
Text and Notes, xvii. 1—22	...	...	693—700
Service of God is duty to man ; life and trusts are sacred ; pry not into evil, but avoid it	...	C. 129	700
Text and Notes, xvii. 23—40	...	...	700—705
Creation declares God's Glory ; His revelation is Truth ; guard your words and avoid dissension	...	C. 130	705
Text and Notes, xvii. 41—60	...	...	705—711
Roots of Evil ; man's preeminence gives him higher responsibility ; Truth will last, and Falsehood perish	...	C. 131	712
Text and Notes, xvii. 61—84	...	...	712—718
Spirit of Inspiration, highest gift of God : Qur-ān teaches Truth ; praise the Beautiful Names of God	...	C. 132	718
Text and Notes, xvii. 85—111	...	...	719—726

Sūra XVIII : *Kahf.*

Introduction and Summary	...	...	727
Revelation warns against evil, and guides to good everlasting ; Parable of Companions of the Cave, and its lessons	...	C. 133	727
Text and Notes, xviii. 1—22	...	...	728—735
True knowledge is with God alone ; dispute not, nor be puffed up with this world's goods	...	C. 134	736
Text and Notes, xviii. 23—44	...	...	736—742
Good Deeds are the best of possessions in God's sight ; pride is the root of evil ; falsehood must perish	...	C. 135	742
Text and Notes, xviii. 45—59	...	...	742—746
Moses and the Mysteries ; highest knowledge must be sought with patience	...	C. 136	746-747
Text and Notes, xviii. 60—74	...	...	747—750

PREFACE

I do not wish to write a long Preface. I wish merely to explain the history of my Project, the scope and plan of this work, and the objects I have held in view.

In separate introductory Notes I have mentioned the useful books to which I have referred, under the headings : Commentaries on the Qurān ; Translations of the Qurān ; and Useful Works of Reference. I have similarly explained the system which I have followed in the transliteration of Arabic words and names ; the Abbreviations I have used : and the principal divisions of the Qurān.

It may be asked : Is there any need for a fresh English Translation ? To those who ask this question I commend a careful consideration of the facts which I have set out in my Note on Translations. After they have read it, I would invite them to take any particular passage in this volume, say ii. 74 or ii. 102, or ii. 164 in the second volume to follow, and compare it with any previous version they choose. If they find that I have helped them even the least bit further in understanding its meaning, or appreciating its beauty, or catching something of the grandeur of the original, I would claim that my humble attempt is justified.

It is the duty of every Muslim, man, woman, or child, to read the Qurān and understand it according to his own capacity. If any one of us attains to some knowledge or understanding of it by study, contemplation, and the test of life, both outward and inward it is his duty, according to his capacity, to instruct others, and share with them the joy and peace which result from contact with the spiritual world. The Qurān—indeed every religious book—has to be read, not only with the tongue and voice and eyes, but with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience can give us. It is in this spirit that I would have my readers approach the Qurān.

It was between the ages of four and five that I first learned to read its Arabic words, to revel in its rhythm and music, and wonder at its meaning. I have a dim recollection of the *Khatm* ceremony which closed that stage. It was called "completion": it really just *began* a spiritual awakening that has gone on ever since. My revered father taught me Arabic, but I must have imbibed from him into my innermost being something more,—something which told me that all the world's thoughts, all the world's most beautiful languages and literatures, are but vehicles for that ineffable message which comes to the heart in rare moments of ecstasy. The soul of mysticism and ecstasy is in the Qurān, as well as that plain guidance for the plain man which a world in a hurry affects to consider as sufficient. It is good to make this personal confession, to an age in which it is in the highest degree unfashionable to speak of religion or spiritual peace or consolation, an age in which words like these draw forth only derision, pity, or contempt.

I have explored Western lands, Western manners, and the depths of Western thought and Western learning, to an extent which has rarely fallen to the lot of an Eastern mortal. But I have never lost touch with my Eastern heritage. Through all my successes and failures I have learned to rely more and more upon the one true thing in all life—the voice that speaks in a tongue above that of mortal man. For me the embodiment of that voice has been in the noble words of the Arabic Qurān, which I have tried to translate for myself and apply to my experience again and again. The service of the Qurān has been the pride and the privilege of many Muslims. I felt that with such life-experience as has fallen to my lot, my service to the Qurān should be to present it in a fitting garb in English. That ambition I have cherished in my mind for more than forty years. I have collected books and materials for it. I have visited places, undertaken journeys, taken notes, sought the society of men, and tried to explore their thoughts and hearts, in order to equip myself for the task. Sometimes I

PREFACE

have considered it too stupendous for me,—the double task of understanding the original, and reproducing its nobility, its beauty, its poetry, its grandeur, and its sweet practical reasonable application to everyday experience. Then I have blamed myself for lack of courage,—the spiritual courage of men who dared all in the Cause which was so dear to them.

Two sets of apparently accidental circumstances at last decided me. A man's life is subject to inner storms far more devastating than those in the physical world around him. In such a storm, in the bitter anguish of a personal sorrow which nearly unseated my reason and made life seem meaningless, a new hope was born out of a systematic pursuit of my long-cherished project. Watered by tears, my manuscript began to grow in depth and earnestness if not in bulk. I guarded it like a secret treasure. Wanderer that I am, I carried it about, thousands of miles, to all sorts of countries and among all sorts of people. At length in the city of Lahore, I happened to mention the matter to some young people who held me in respect and affection. They showed an enthusiasm and an eagerness which surprised me. They almost took the matter out of my hands. They asked for immediate publication. I had various bits ready, but not even one complete *Sip̄ara*. They made me promise to complete at least one *Sip̄ara* before I left Lahore. As if by magic, a publisher, a *katib* (calligraphist to write the Arabic Text), an engraver of blocks for such text, and a printer were found, all equally anxious to push forward the scheme. Blessed be youth, for its energy and determination. "Where others flinch, rash youth will dare!"

Gentle and discerning reader! what I wish to present to you is an English Interpretation, side by side with the Arabic Text. The English shall be, not a mere substitution of one word for another, but the best expression I can give to the fullest meaning which I can understand from the Arabic Text. The rhythm, music, and exalted tone of the original should be reflected in the English Interpretation. It may be but a faint reflection, but such beauty and power as my pen can command shall be brought to its service. I want to make English itself an Islamic language, if such a person as I can do it. And I must give you all the accessory aid which I can. In rhythmic prose, or free verse (whichever you like to call it), I prepare the atmosphere for you in a running Commentary. Introducing the subject generally, I come to the actual *Sūras*. Where they are short, I give you one or two paragraphs of my rhythmic Commentary to prepare you for the text. Where the *Sūra* is long, I introduce the subject-matter in short appropriate paragraphs of the Commentary from time to time, each indicating the particular verses to which it refers. The paragraphs of the running Commentary are numbered consecutively, with some regard to the connection with the preceding and the following paragraphs. It is possible to read this running rhythmic Commentary by itself to get a general bird's-eye view of the contents of the Holy Book before you proceed to the study of the Book itself.

The text in English is printed in larger type than the running Commentary, in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. It is also displayed differently, in parallel columns with the Arabic Text. Each *Sūra* and the verse of each *Sūra* is separately numbered, and the numbers are shown page by page. The system of numbering the verses has not been uniform in previous translations. European editors and translators have allowed their numbering to diverge considerably from that accepted in the East. This causes confusion in giving and verifying references. The different *Qiraats* sometimes differ as to the punctuation stops and the numbering of the verses. This is not a vital matter, but it causes confusion in references. It is important that at least in Islamic countries one system of numbering should be adopted. I have adopted that of the Egyptian edition published under the authority of the King of Egypt. This will probably be accepted in Egypt and in Arabic-speaking countries, as those countries generally look up to Egypt in matters of literature. I am glad to see that the text shortly to be published by the Anjuman-i-Himāyat-i-Islām of Lahore is following the same system of numbering. I recommend to other publishers in India the same good example. If once this is done, we shall have a uniform system of numbering. I have retained the numbering

PREFACE

of Sections, as it is universally used in the Arabic copies, and marks a logical division of the *Sūras*. I have supplied a further aid to the reader in indicating sub-divisions of the Sections into paragraphs. They are not numbered, but are distinguished by the use of a flowery initial letter.

In translating the Text I have aired no views of my own, but followed the received Commentators. Where they differ among themselves, I have had to choose what appeared to me to be the most reasonable opinion from all points of view. Where it is a question merely of words, I have not considered the question important enough to discuss in the Notes, but where it is a question of substance, I hope adequate explanations will be found in the Notes. Where I have departed from the literal translation in order to express the spirit of the original better in English, I have explained the literal meaning in the Notes. For example, see ii. 104. n. and ii 26 n. In choosing an English word for an Arabic word a translator necessarily exercises his own judgment and may be unconsciously expressing a point of view, but that is inevitable.

Let me explain the scope of the Notes. I have made them as short as possible consistently with the object I have in view, *viz.*, to give to the English reader, scholar, as well as general reader, a fairly complete but concise view of what I understand to be the meaning of the Text. To discuss theological controversies or enter into polemical arguments I have considered outside my scope. Such discussions and arguments may be necessary and valuable, but they should find a place in separate treatises, if only out of respect to the Holy Book. Besides, such discussions leave no room for more important matters on which present-day readers desire information. In this respect our Commentators have not always been discreet. On questions of law, the Qurān lays down general principles, and these I have explained. I have avoided technical details: these will be found discussed in their proper place in my book on "Anglo-Muhammadan Law". Nor have I devoted much space to grammatical or philological Notes. On these points I consider that the labours of the vast body of our learned men in the past have left little new to say now. There is usually not much controversy, and I have accepted their conclusions without setting out the reasons for them. Where it has been necessary for the understanding of the Text to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse, I have done so briefly, but have not allowed it to absorb a disproportionate amount of space. It will be found that every verse revealed for a particular occasion has also a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time. What we are concerned about now, in the fourteenth century of the Hijra, is: what guidance can we draw for ourselves from the message of God?

I spoke of the general meaning of the verses. Every earnest and reverent student of the Qurān, as he proceeds with his study, will find, with an inward joy difficult to describe, how this general meaning also enlarges as his own capacity for understanding increases. It is like a traveller climbing a mountain: the higher he goes, the farther he sees. From a literary point of view the poet Keats has described his feeling when he discovered Chapman's Homer:—

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken,
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific,—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise,—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

How much greater is the joy and sense of wonder and miracle when the Qurān opens our spiritual eyes! The meaning which we thought we had grasped expands. New worlds are opened out. As we progress, still newer, and again newer worlds "swim

PREFACE

into our ken." The miracle deepens and deepens, and almost completely absorbs us. And yet we know that the "face of God"—our final goal—has not yet been reached. We are in the *mulk* of Sulaimān (Q. ii. 102), which the evil ones denied, belied, and even turned into blasphemy. But we can ignore blasphemy, ridicule and contempt, for we are on the threshold of Realities, and a little perfume from the garden of the Holy One has already gladdened our nostrils.

Such meaning it is most difficult to express. But where I can, I have indicated it in the Notes, in the Commentary, and with the help of the rhythm and the elevated language of the Text.

The Arabic Text I have had printed from photographic blocks made for me by Master Muhammad Sharif. The calligraphy is from the pen of Pir 'Abdul Hamid, with whom I have been in touch and who has complied with my desire for a bold round hand, with the words clearly separated, the vowel points accurately placed over or under the letters to which they relate, and the verses duly numbered and placed in juxtaposition with their English equivalents. Calligraphy occupies an important place in Muslim Art, and it is my desire that my version should not in any way be deficient in this respect.

I have been fortunate in securing the co-operation of Professor Zafar Iqbāl in looking over the proofs of the Arabic Text. In connection with the Anjuman's edition of the Arabic Qurān he has devoted much time and thought to the correct punctuation of the Text, and he has also investigated its history and problems. I hope he will some day publish these valuable notes. I have been privileged to see the Anjuman's Text before its formal publication. I consider it the most carefully prepared Text of any produced in India, and I have generally followed it in punctuation and the numbering of verses,—the only points on which any difficulties are likely to arise on the Quranic Text.

It has been my desire to have the printing done in the best style possible, with new type, on good glazed paper, and with the best ink procurable. I hope the result will please those who are good enough to approve of the more essential features of the work. The proprietors of the Ripon Press and all their staff, but especially Mr. Badruddīn Badr, their Proof Examiner, have taken a keen interest in their work. The somewhat unusual demands made on their time and attention they have met cheerfully, and I am obliged to them. The publisher, Shaikh Muḥammad Ashraf, has thrown himself heart and soul into his work, and I hope the public will appreciate his efforts.

My plan is to issue each *Siphāra* as it is ready, at intervals of not more than three months. As the work proceeds, I hope it will be possible to accelerate the pace. The paging will be continuous in the subsequent volumes. The final binding will be in either three or two volumes. It is my intention to provide a complete analytical Index to the whole. I hope all interested will sign the Publisher's subscription order in advance.

One final word to my readers. Read, study and digest the Holy Book. Read slowly and let it sink into your heart and soul. Such study will, like virtue, be its own reward. If you find anything in this volume to criticise, please let it not spoil your enjoyment of the rest. If you write to me, quoting chapter and verse, I shall be glad to consider your criticism, but let it not vex you if I exercise my own judgment in deciding for myself. Any corrections accepted will be gratefully acknowledged. On the other hand, if there is something that specially pleases you or helps you, please do not hesitate to write to me. I have given up other interests to help you. It will be a pleasure to know that my labour has not been in vain. If you address me care of my Publisher at his Lahore address, he will always forward the letters to me.

LAHORE

A. YŪSUF 'ALĪ.

4th April, 1934

= 18th of the month
of Pilgrimage, 1352 H.

COMMENTARIES ON THE QURĀN

Quranic literature is so voluminous that no single man can compass a perusal of the whole. Besides the extant works there were innumerable works written for special groups of people or from special points of view or for special purposes, which have perished. And more works are being added every day. The activity in this line has never been greater than it is now.

There is no Book in the world in whose service so much talent, so much labour, so much time and money have been expended as has been the case with the Qurān. A mere glance at Imām Suyūṭī's (d. 911 H.) *Itqān* or Hājī Khalīfah's (d. 1059 H.) *Kashf-uz-zunūn* will show the encyclopædic volume of the Quranic sciences in their day.

Since then the volume has continued to go on increasing, although it must be admitted that the quality of the later literature on the subject leaves much to be desired. With the retrocession of the Islamic nations in original work in science, art, and philosophy, and the concomitant limitation in their outlook and experience in various phases of intellectual and spiritual life, has come a certain limitation in the free spirit of research and enquiry. The new Renaissance of Islam which is just beginning will, it is hoped, sweep away cobwebs and let in the full right of reason and understanding.

The need for an explanation of the verses of the Qurān arose quite early. Even before the whole of the Qurān was revealed, people used to ask the Apostle all sorts of questions as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or of their bearing on problems as they arose, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more light. The Apostle's answers were carefully stored in the memory of the Companions (*aṣ-ḥāb*) and were afterwards written down. The next generation, the *Tābi'īn* were those who had not personally conversed with the Apostle, like the Companions, but had conversed with the Companions and learned from them. Subsequent generations always went back to establish a chain of evidence through the *Tābi'īn* and the Companions. Through them grew up the science of *Ḥadīth* or Traditions. As this literature grew, it became necessary to establish strict rules by which the evidence could be examined and tested, so as to separate that which was considered to be established from that which was doubtful or weak, and that which was to be rejected as unproved. In the evolution of the science of *Ḥadīth*, it became clear that even among the Companions certain persons had better memories than others, or better opportunities of becoming really acquainted with the Apostle's true meaning, or, in other ways, a better title to be called true expositors, and the number of such persons came to be limited to ten only. Similarly the claims of the *Tābi'īn* came to be examined and graded, and so on. Thus arose a new science, in which the names and positions of persons in *Ḥadīth* literature were examined biographically and in other ways.

The *Ḥadīth* literature dealt with all sorts of matters, including Theology, Ethics, and Exegesis (explanation of the Qurān). Exegesis soon became an independent science by itself and was called *Tafsīr*, and the sphere of *Tafsīr* itself began to widen as the experience and knowledge of the Arabs and Arabic writers began to increase. Besides the examination of correct traditions from various kinds and grades of authorities, it began to examine the meaning of words philologically, collecting a vast amount of learning as to root meanings, the usage of the Quraish tribe of Arabs, to which the Apostle belonged, the usage and meaning of words in the purest original Arabic before it became mixed up with foreign idioms and usages by the use of the Arabic language by non-Arabs in Islam, and by the influence of the enormous geographical expansion of the Arab race in the first few centuries of Islam. The increasing knowledge of history and of Jewish and Christian legends enabled the Commentators to illustrate the Text of the Holy Book with reference to these. Sometimes the amount of Jewish stuff (some of it absurd), which found its way into the Commentaries, was out of all proportion to its importance and relevance, and

COMMENTARIES ON THE QURĀN

gave rise to the legend, which has been exploited by polemical Christian and Jewish writers, that Islam was built up on an imperfect knowledge of Christianity and Judaism, or that it accepts as true the illustrative legends from the Talmud or the Midrash or various fantastic schools of Christianity. Then came philosophy and the mystic doctrine of the *Sūfi* schools. The development of the science of *kalām* (built on formal logic), and its further offshoot the *ʿIlm-ul-ʿAqāid* (the philosophical exposition of the grounds of our belief) introduced further elements on the intellectual side, while *Tāwīl* (esoteric exposition of the hidden or inner meaning) introduced elements on the spiritual side, based on a sort of transcendental intuition of the expositor. The *Sūfi* mystics at least adhered to the rules of their own Orders, which were very strict. But many of the non-*Sūfi* writers on *Tāwīl* indulged in an amount of licence in interpretation which has rightly called forth a protest on the part of the more sober 'Ulamā.

For my part I agree with this protest. While freely reserving the right of individual judgment on the part of every earnest writer, I think the art of interpretation must stick as closely as possible to the text which it seeks to interpret. Every serious writer and thinker has a right to use all the knowledge and experience he possesses in the service of the Qurān. But he must not mix up his own theories and conclusions, however reasonable, with the interpretation of the Text itself, which is usually perfectly perspicuous, as it claims it to be. Our difficulties in interpretation often arise from various causes, of which I will mention just a few : —

(1) Arabic words in the Text have acquired other meanings than those which were understood by the Apostle and his Companions. All living languages undergo such transformations. The early Commentators and Philologists went into these matters with a very comprehensive grasp, and we must accept their conclusions. Where they are not unanimous, we must use our judgment and historic sense in adopting the interpretation of that authority which appeals to us most. We must not devise new verbal meanings.

(2) Even since the early Commentators wrote, the Arabic language has further developed, and later Commentators often abandon the interpretations of earlier Commentators without sufficient reason. In exercising our selective judgment in such cases it would be a good rule to prefer the earlier to the later interpretation, though, where a later writer has reviewed the earlier interpretations and given good reasons for his own view, he has an advantage which we must freely concede to him.

(3) Classical Arabic has a vocabulary in which the meaning of each root-word is so comprehensive that it is difficult to interpret it in a modern analytical language word for word, or by the use of the same word in all places where the original word occurs in the Text. A striking example is furnished by the word *Ṣabr*, about which see my notes on ii. 45 and ii. 153. Even though one particular shade of meaning may be predominant in any particular passage, the others are latent. So in a ray of light, when a prism analyses it, we may look at a portion of the field where a particular colour predominates, but other colours do not escape our glance. An Arabic word is often a full ray of light; when a translator looks at it through the prism of a modern analytical language, he misses a great deal of its meaning by confining his attention to one particular colour. European translators have often failed in this respect and sometimes even been landed in absurdities because these delicate rich tones are not studied in their languages or literatures, and they do not look for them or appreciate them in the best examples of Oriental style. If they despise them or think them fantastic, they had best leave the interpretation of Oriental literatures alone. This is all the more so in religious or spiritual literature. No human language can possibly be adequate for the expression of the highest spiritual thought. Such thought must be expressed symbolically in terse and comprehensive words, out of which people will perceive just as much light and colour as their spiritual eyes are capable of perceiving. It is possible that their prism will only show them a dark blue while a whole glorious symphony of colours is hidden from their eyes. And so it comes about that through the

COMMENTARIES ON THE QURĀN

prism of a clever English translation, poor 'Umar (Omar) *Khayyām* emerges as a sensualist and cynic who sees no higher purpose in life than drinking wine, dallying with women, and holding up his hands in despair at "this sorry scheme of things entire." And so the parables of stern morality in the Qurān, its mystic earnestness, and its pictures of future beatitude are distorted into idle fables, incoherent effusions, and a sensual paradise!

(4) An opposite error sometimes arises because in certain matters the rich vocabulary of the Qurān distinguishes between things and ideas of a certain kind by special words, for which there is only a general word in English. Instances are: *Rahmān* and *Rahīm* (Most Merciful); see i. l. n.; 'afā, *safaha*, *gafara* (to forgive); see ii. 109. n; and the various words for Creation; see ii. 117. n. The fact is that it gives us a very limited idea of God's Mercy, when we only use the English word "mercy": the Quranic idea implies not only pity and forgiveness but the Grace which protects us and keeps us from sin, and indeed guides us to the light of his "Countenance" So the "forgiveness" of God is a thing totally different in quality from the forgiveness which a man can give to his brother man: the equation implied in "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us" is a misleading fallacy. So, again, "Creation" is not just a simple process done by God at some remote time and finished with: the Quranic idea implies various processes and the continuous presence and activity of God in His Creation.

(5) God's purpose is eternal, and His plan is perfect, but man's intelligence is limited at its very best. In the same individual it grows and declines according to the strength of his powers and the width of his experience. If we take mankind collectively the variations are even greater from age to age and from people to people. There is thus no finality in human interpretation. And in the thing interpreted - God's Creation—there is constant flux and change. So that the impact of the one on the other must yield diverse results. The view of Kunchinjunga must vary infinitely according to the position of the observer, even if Kunchinjunga remained the same. But if Kunchinjunga itself varies, there is a double cause of variation in the view. So I believe in progressive interpretation, in the need for understanding and explaining spiritual matters from different angles. The difficulties that confront me may not be the same as those that confront you. The problems which our age has to meet may not be the same as the problems which puzzled earnest minds of the fourth or sixth or later centuries of the Hijra. Therefore it is no merit to hug the solutions offered in the fourth or sixth centuries when our souls cry out in hunger for solace in the fourteenth century of the Hijra.

The distinction drawn by Commentators between matters of report (*maṣūlāt*) and matters of judgment (*ma'qūlāt*) is a sound one, and I heartily accept it. But I would extend the scope of the *ma'qūlāt* far beyond questions of idiom and meaning. In the former the issues are: what actually happened, or what was actually said, or how were certain things done? Here the closer we go back to contemporary authority, the better. In the latter, the issues are: what is the bearing of this truth on our lives, or what illustration helps us best to grasp this, or what is the wisdom we can extract from this? In such matters, the closer we come to our own circumstances and experiences, the better. It is not only our right but our duty to seek honestly our own solutions, and while we respect authority, we must not neglect or despise the gifts which God has accumulated for us through the ages.

The principles on which I have worked may be briefly stated. In matters of philology and language I accept the best authority among those who were competent to deal with these questions: the older the better. In matters of narration, contemporary authorities are best, subject to such corrections as have to be applied for their points of view. As to the particular occasions on which particular verses were revealed, the information is interesting and valuable from a historical point of view, and our older writers have collected ample material for it. But to lay too much stress on it to-day puts the

COMMENTARIES ON THE QURĀN

picture out of all perspective. The Qurān was not revealed for a particular occasion only, but for all time. The particular occasion is now past. Our chief interest now is to see how it can guide us in our present lives. Its meaning is so manifold, and when tested, it is so true, that we should be wise to concentrate on the matters that immediately help us. So in nature plants seek out of the soil just that food which gives them nourishment. There is plenty of other food left in the soil, which other plants take, which can digest it. In matters of remote history or folk-lore, we must take the results of the latest researches. In interpreting Jewish or Christian legends or beliefs we must go to Jewish or Christian sources, but by way of illustration only, not in the direction of incorporating such beliefs or systems. Though they were true in their original purity, we are not sure of the form which they subsequently took, and in any case the fuller light of the sun obscures the lesser light of the stars.

In the application of spiritual truths to our own times and our own lives, we must use every kind of knowledge, science, and experience which we possess, but we must not obtrude irrelevant matter into our discussions. Let us take simple examples. When we speak of the rising of sun in the east, we do not go on to reconcile the expression with the Copernican system of astronomy. What we *mean* is as true under the Copernican system as it was under the Ptolemaic system. When we speak of the endless plains of India, we are not put on our defence because the earth is round. Nor will such poetic expressions as the seven firmaments raise questions as to the nature of space in modern astronomy. Man's intellect is given to him to investigate the nature of the physical world around him. He forms different conceptions of it at different times. Spiritual truths are quite independent of the question which of these conceptions are true. They deal with matters which are beyond the ken of physical science. In explaining or illustrating them we shall use such language as is current among the people to whom we speak.

Let me set out the names of the most important *Tafsirs*, especially those to which I have from time to time referred. They are not, however, in any sense my authorities. They belong to widely different schools of thought, and some of them express extreme views with which I do not agree. I only adopt the general sense of accepted Commentaries.

(1) The monumental work of Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr *Ṭabarī*, d. 310 H. A perfect mine of historical information, as the author was both a historian and a Traditionist. Copies are not easily accessible.

(2) The *Mufradāt*, a dictionary of difficult words and phrases in the Qurān, by Abul Qāsim Ḥusain Rāgib, of Ispahān, d. 503 H. Also explains allusions.

(3) The *Kashshāf*, by Abul-Qāsim Maḥmūd *Zamakhsharī*, of Khwārizm, d. 538 H. Very full in the explanation of words and idioms; takes a decidedly rational and ethical view of doctrine. Numerous Commentaries have been written on this Commentary.

(4) *Tafsīr Kabīr*, by Fakhr ud-dīn Muḥammad *Rāzī*, d. 606 H. Very comprehensive. Strong in interpretations from a Ṣūfī or spiritual point of view.

(5) *Anwār-ut-Tanzīl*, by Qāḍī Nāsir-ud-dīn Abū Sa'īd *Baidhāwī*, d. 685 H. Has drawn largely from the *Mufradāt*, the *Kashshāf*, and the *Tafsīr Kabīr*, but incorporates a good deal of original matter. A very popular Commentary, on which again numerous Commentaries have been written.

(6) The *Tafsīr* of Abul Fidā Ismā'il Ibn *Kathīr*, d. 774 H. Voluminous, but has great authority among the 'Ulamā.

(7) *Itqān fī 'ulūm-il-Qur-ān*, by Jalāl-ud-dīn Suyūṭī, d. 911 H. A comprehensive review of the sciences of the Qurān, being an introduction to this *Majma'-ul-Bahrain*.

(8) *Tafsīr Jalālain*.—Written by the two Jalāl-ud-dīns, one of whom was the author of the *Itqān*, mentioned above, d. 911 H. A concise and meritorious Commentary, on which again a number of Commentaries have been written.

COMMENTARIES ON THE QUR'ÂN

(9) Our country has produced some notable scholars in the realm of *Tafsîr*. They wrote in Arabic and Persian, and the later ones have written in Urdu.

The earliest I can trace is Shaikh 'Alî Ibn Aḥmad Mahāimî (of Māhim, near Bombay), d. 835 H.=1432 A. D., author of the *Tafsîr Raḥmānî*. Almost contemporary with him was 'Allāma Shams-ud-dîn, of Daulatābād and Delhi, who lived during the brilliant reign of Ibrāhîm Sharqî of Jaunpur (1400—1440 A. D.). He wrote in Persian. During the nineteenth century, the famous Muḥaddith of Delhi, Shāh Walî-ullāh, and his two sons Shāh 'Abdul 'Azîz (d. 1824) and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir (d. 1826) wrote both translations and Commentaries. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azîz wrote in Persian and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir in Urdu. The Urdu Commentary of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān of 'Aligarh (d. 1898) has not met the approval of the 'Ulamā. On the other hand the more recent Urdu Commentary of Maulvi 'Abdul Haqq, the *Tafsîr Haqqānî*, has passed through several editions, is quite modern in tone and manageable in bulk, and is widely circulated in India. I have derived much instruction from it and have used it constantly. The Commentary of Maulvi Abul Kalām Āzād has been planned on a spacious scale and has not yet been finished.

(10) The Modernist school in Egypt got a wise lead from the late Shaikh Muḥammad 'Abduh (d. 1323 H. = 1905 A. D.), whose unfinished Commentary is being completed by Muḥammad Rashîd Riḍhā, the talented editor of the *Manār* newspaper. The work of Shaikh Tantāwî Jauharî, a pupil of 'Abduh, finds the "jewels" of the Qur'ân and of the sciences mutually illuminative, and suggests many new lines of thought. 'Allāma Farîd Wajdî is also spoken of as a good modern Commentator: .I have not yet been able to get a copy of his work.

(11) It has been said that the Qur'ân is its own best Commentary. As we proceed with the study of the Book, we find how true this is. A careful comparison and collation of passages from the Qur'ân removes many difficulties. Use a good Concordance, such as the one I have named among the Works of Reference, and you will find that one passage throws light on another.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE QURĀN

Almost all languages spoken by Muslims have translations of the Qurān in them. Usually the Text is printed with the Translation. If the language is undeveloped, many of the Arabic words of the Qurān are taken over bodily into it for want of corresponding words in the language. Even in cultivated languages like Persian or Turkish, the introduction of religious terms from Arabic gave a body of words which were common to the whole Islamic world, and thus cemented that unity of the Muslim Brotherhood which is typified by the Qibla. Where the notion itself is new to the speakers of polished languages, they are glad to borrow the Arabic word expressing that notion and all the associations connected with it. Such a word is *Qibla*. Where the language is undeveloped, the translation is nothing more than a rough explanation of the Arabic Text. The translation has neither grammatical finish nor a form which can stand independently by itself. That is what happened with the earlier Urdū translations. They were really rough explanations. The ambition of every learned Muslim is to read the Qurān in Arabic. The ambition of every Muslim is to read the *sounds* of the Arabic Text. I wish that his or her ambition were also to *understand* the Qurān, either in Arabic or in the mother tongue or some well-developed tongue which he or she understands. Hence the need for good and accurate translations.

The translations into non-European languages known to me are: Persian, Turkish, Urdū, Tamil (used by Moplas), Pashto (for Afghans), Bengali, Malay, some of the languages of the Eastern Archipelago, and some of the African languages. I believe there is also a Chinese (dialectal) translation.

The earliest Urdu translation was by Shāh 'Abdul Qādir of Delhi (d. 1826). He has already been mentioned among the Indian Commentators. Since then numerous Urdū translations have followed, some of which have been left incomplete. Among the complete ones, much used at the present day, may be mentioned those of Shāh Rafī' ud-dīn of Delhi, Shāh Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī, and Maulvī Naẓīr Aḥmad (d. 1912). Personally I prefer the last. The projected Urdu translation by Hakīm Aḥmad Shujā' has not yet been published.

Before the development of the modern European vernaculars, the cultivated language of Europe was Latin. A Latin translation was made for the Monastery of Clugny about 1143 (in the sixth century of the Hijra) but not published till 1543. The place of publication was Basle and the publisher Bibliander. This was translated into Italian, German, and Dutch. Schweigger's German translation was published at Nuremberg (Bavaria) in 1616. A French translation by Du Ryer was published at Paris in 1647, and a Russian one at St. Petersburg in 1776. Savary's French translation appeared in 1783, and Kasimirski's French translation (which has passed through several editions) first appeared in 1840, the French interest in Islam having been stimulated by French conquests in Algeria and North Africa. The Germans have followed up Schweigger with Boysen's translation in 1773, Wahl's in 1828, and Ullmann's (first edition in 1840). I believe the Aḥmadiya Association of Lahore have in hand a fresh translation into German and Dutch.

Meanwhile Maracci had produced in 1689 a Latin version of the Qurān with the Arabic Text and quotations from various Arabic Commentaries, carefully selected and garbled, so as to give the worst possible impression of Islam to Europe. Maracci was a learned man, and there is no pretence about the object he had in view, *viz.*, to discredit Islam by an elaborate show of quotations from Muslim authorities themselves. Maracci was himself a Confessor to Pope Innocent XI; his work is dedicated to the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I; and he introduces it by an introductory volume containing what he calls a "refutation of the Qurān."

The first English translation by A. Ross was but a translation of the first French translation of Du Ryer of 1647, and was published a few years after Du Ryer's. George Sale's translation (1734) was based on Maracci's Latin version, and even his notes and his Preliminary Discourse are based mainly on Maracci. Considering that Maracci's object was to discredit Islam in the eyes of Europe, it is remarkable that Sale's translation

TRANSLATIONS OF THE QURĀN

should be looked upon as a standard translation in the English-speaking world, and should pass through edition after edition, being even included in the series called the Chandos Classics and receiving the benediction of Sir E. Denison Ross. The Rev. J. M. Rodwell arranged the Sūras in a rough chronological order. His translation was first published in 1861. Though he tries to render the idiom fairly, his notes show the mind of a Christian clergyman, who was more concerned to "show up" the Book than to appreciate or expound its beauties. Prof. E. H. Palmer's translation (first published in 1876) suffers from the idea that the Qurān ought to be translated into colloquial language. He failed to realise the beauty and grandeur of style in the original Arabic. To him that style was "rude and rugged": we may more justifiably call his translation careless and slipshod.

The amount of mischief done by these versions of non-Muslim and anti-Muslim writers has led Muslim writers to venture into the field of English translation. The first Muslim to undertake an English translation was Dr. Muḥammad 'Abdul Ḥakīm Khān, of Patāla, 1905. It is said that Mirzā Ḥairat Dehlavī also published a translation, but I have not seen it, nor have I further details. My dear friend, the late Nawwāb 'Imād-ul-Mulk, Saiyid Ḥusain Bilgrāmī, of Hyderabad, Deccan translated a portion, but he did not live to complete his work. The Alimadiya Sect has also been active in the field. Its Qādiyān Anjuman published a version of the first Sīpāra in 1915. Apparently no more was published. Its Lahore Anjuman has published Maulvi Muḥammad 'Alī's translation (first edition in 1917), which has passed through more than one edition. It is a scholarly work, and is equipped with adequate explanatory matter in the notes and the Preface, and a fairly full Index. But the English of the Text is decidedly weak, and is not likely to appeal to those who know no Arabic. There are two other Muslim translations of great merit. But they have been published without the Arabic Text. Ḥāfiz Gulām Sarwar's translation (published in 1930 or 1929) deserves to be better known than it is. He has provided fairly full summaries of the Sūras, section by section, but he has practically no notes to his Text. I think such notes are necessary for a full understanding of the Text. In many cases the Arabic words and phrases are so pregnant of meaning that a Translator would be in despair unless he were allowed to explain all that he understands by them. Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall's translation was published in 1930. He is an English Muslim, a literary man of standing, and an Arabic scholar. But he has added very few notes to elucidate the Text. His rendering is "almost literal": it can hardly be expected that it can give an adequate idea of a Book which (in his own words) can be described as "that inimitable symphony the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy." Perhaps the attempt to catch something of that symphony in another language is impossible. Greatly daring, I have made that attempt. We do not blame an artist who tries to catch in his picture something of the glorious light of a spring landscape.

The English language being widely spread over the world, many people interested in Islam will get their ideas of the Qurān from English translations. It is good that qualified Muslims should make the attempt to present the picture which their own mental and spiritual vision presents to themselves. The Indian educational system has enthroned English as the common language of culture for a population of 350 millions. The most educated of its 80 millions of Muslims—unless they know Arabic—look to English as the most cultivated medium of expression. Their non-Muslim fellow-countrymen judge—usually misjudge—their religion by the material which is available to them in English. We should improve and increase this material as much as we can and from as many points of view as we can. Some Muslim nations—like the Turks—have now determined to provide their religious literature (including the Holy Book) in their own national language. In order to keep them in touch with the thought and points of view of their brethren in faith, the English language would under present conditions be the most convenient medium. These are the considerations which have moved me to undertake the stupendous task of providing an English Interpretation of the Qurān. I pray for strength and light, so that I may be enabled to succeed in this service to Islam.

USEFUL WORKS OF REFERENCE

The wide compass of the Qurān makes it necessary to consult works of reference on almost every conceivable subject, to enable us to elucidate the various points that arise. To deal adequately with such a Book, the widest reading is necessary as well as the most varied experience in life. But the interests of readers require that a handy Commentary should not roam too far afield. Bearing this in view the three essential kinds of books would be: (a) Previous Commentaries; (b) previous Translations; (c) Dictionaries and General Works of Reference, easily accessible. I have set out (a) and (b) in the previous two Notes. I note a few under (c) :—

1. Imām Abul Qāsim Hussain Rāgib's *Mufradāt*: a concise Arabic dictionary of words and phrases in the Qurān. Already mentioned under Commentaries.

2. The well-known Arabic Dictionary, *Qāmūs*.

3. The well-known Arabic Dictionary, *Lisān-ul-'Arab*.

4. The concise Arabic-Persian Dictionary, *Ṣurāḥ*.

5. J. Penrice's *Dictionary & Glossary of the Koran*.

6. E. W. Lane: *English-Arabic Lexicon*.

7. Imām Jalāl-ud-dīn Suyūṭī's *Itqān fī 'ulūm il Qu-rān*: a veritable encyclopædia of Quranic sciences.

8. Nöldeke und Schwally: *Geschichte des Qorans*. A German Essay on the Chronology of the Qurān Its criticisms and conclusions are from a non-Muslim point of view and to us not always acceptable, though it is practically the last word of European scholarship on the subject.

9. *Encyclopædia of Islam*. Nearly completed. Very unequal in its various parts.

10. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th edition. A great advance on previous editions, as regards the attention it devotes to Arabic learning.

11. Hughes's *Dictionary of Islam*. Out of date, but still useful.

12. Ibn Hishām: *Sīrat-ur-Rasūl*. A fairly detailed Life of the Apostle

13. Maulvi Shiblī Nu'mānī (d. 1914=1334 H.): *Sīrat-un Nabī* (An Urdu Life of the Apostle)

14. *Faṭḥ-ur-Raḥmān*, an Arabic Concordance to the Qurān, by Faiḍ-ullāḥ Bik Ḥasanī, printed in Cairo in 1346 H. Full and well arranged, and easy to use.

TRANSLITERATION OF ARABIC WORDS AND NAMES.

The following table shows the system which I have followed in transliterating the letters of the Arabic alphabet :-

ا { Consonantal sound }	a	ط	.....	t
إ Long vowel *	ā	ظ	.....	z
ب	b	ع	.....	' (apostrophe)
ت	t	غ	.....	g
		ف	.....	f

kh	m
d	n
z	h
r	, consonant w
z	, long vowel* ū
s	, diphthong au
sh	, consonant y
ص	, long vowel* i
ض	, diphthong ai
Short vowels :	َ (fatha) a ِ (kasra) i ُ (dhamma) u

1. For the *hamza* (ء) I have used no distinctive sign. An apostrophe for it and an inverted apostrophe for the 'ain (ع), or *vice versa*, is confusing to English readers. As a moved consonant, it is sufficiently shown in English by the long or short vowel which moves it, e.g., *ab, Ra'if*. Where it is a hiatus preceded by a *fatha*, I have shown it by a second *a* : thus, *Iqraa*, the cave of *Hiraa*. In other cases it has not been possible to show it without using a distinctive sign. That is why I ordinarily write : *Qurān* ; but in an Arabic context I write : *Qur-ān*, e.g., in No. 7 in my List of Useful Works of Reference.

2. The final *h* preceded by the short *a* is scarcely pronounced, and I have left it out. Hence *Sūra*, *Fātiḥa*, *Hijra*, etc., where the Arabic spelling would require *Sūrah*, *Fātiḥah*, *Hijrah*, etc.

3. In internationalised words and names I have used the spelling ordinarily current in English ; e.g., *Mecca*, *Medina*, *Maulvi*, *Urdu*, *Islam*, *Israel*, *Abraham*, *Jacob*. Here the boundary is thin and rather ill-defined, and possibly my practice and that of my proof-readers has not been absolutely uniform.

4. Some names, e.g., *Ishmael*, *Hagar*, etc., have acquired a contemptuous association in their European forms, while the persons they represent are sacred personages held in great honour in Islam. I have, therefore, avoided the European forms and used the Arabic forms, *Ismā'il*, *Hājar*, etc.

* Where it is really pronounced long. Hence *Abū Sufyān*, but *Abul Qāsim* ; *fin-nār* but *fī-hi Khālagnā-kum*, but *Khālagnal-insān*.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

I have not used many abbreviations. Those I have used are shown below :—

- A. D. = Anno Domini=year of the Christian Calendar.
- Bk. = Book.
- C. = The running Commentary, in rhythmic prose.
- Cf. = compare.
- d. = date of death of an author (to show the age in which he lived)
- Deut. = The Book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament.
- E. B. = *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th edition.
- e. g. = *exempli gratia*=for example
- Exod. = The Book of Exodus, Old Testament.
- Gen. = The Book of Genesis, Old Testament.
- H. = year of the Hijra
- H G. S = Ḥāfiẓ Gulam Sarwar's Translation of the Qurān.
- i e. = *id est*=that is.
- Josh. = Book of Joshua, Old Testament.
- Matt. = Gospel of St. Matthew, New Testament.
- M. M. A. = Maulvi Muḥammad 'Alī's Translation of the Qurān.
- M. P. = Mr. M. Pickthall's *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*.
- n. = note.
- Num. = The Book of Numbers, Old Testament.
- p. = page.
- pp. = pages.
- Q. = Qurān.
- Q. xx. 25 = Qurān, Sura 20, verse 25.
- Rev. = Revelation of St. John, New Testament.
- S. = sūra.
- v = verse.
- vv = verses.
- viz = *videlicet* = namely.
- 30, 30, etc. = the end of one Sīpāra, two Sīpāras, etc. A Sīpāra is arithmetically the 30th part of the Qurān.

PUNCTUATION MARKS IN THE ARABIC TEXT

The punctuation marks in the Arabic Text have been worked out by our 'Ulama with great care and minute attention to details. The earliest manuscripts had few or no punctuation marks. Their growth and development furnish an interesting history, on which I hope Professor Zafar Iqbāl, who has gone into the question, will publish his notes. In classical Europe, Greek had practically no punctuation marks. Later Latin had one or two rudimentary ones. In modern Europe they developed with printing. Aldus Manutius (16th century) was the first to work out a regular system. The Muslims were much earlier in the field for Quranic purposes, although in current Urdū, Persian, or Arabic, punctuation is not a strong point.

Quranic punctuation is an elaborate system, in which three kinds of marks are used. First, there are marks to show the variations in the systems of Qiraat. The most important of these is what is known as the *Mu'ānaqa* معانقة. This literally means the action of two persons embracing each other shoulder to shoulder, as in the ceremonious salute at the celebration of 'Īd. The technical meaning in connection with the Quranic text is that a certain word or expression so marked can be construed as going either with the words or expressions preceding it or with those following it. The word or expression in question is indicated by three dots ∴ placed before and after it, above other punctuation marks if any. An example will be found in Q. ii. 2, where the word *fi-hi* may be construed either as referring to the word *Kitāb* in the preceding clause, or to the word *hudan* in the succeeding clause. Either or both constructions are admissible. Passages where such constructions occur are indicated in the margin of the Arabic Text : by the abbreviation ع, where this was worked out by the earlier Commentators (*Mutaqaddimīn*), or by the word معانقة in full, where it was worked out by the later Commentators (*Mutaakhkhirīn*). The numeral above it shows the serial number of the *Mu'ānaqa* of each series.

Secondly, there are marginal marks showing division into sections or paragraphs. These are denoted by the letter 'ain (ع) in the margin, and are explained under the heading "Divisions of the Qurān."

Thirdly, there are the ordinary punctuation marks in the Text. A knowledge of the most important of these is necessary for an intelligent reading of the Text. Most important of all is a big circle ○ to denote the end of one Āyat and the beginning of another. If the end of the Āyat is not also the end of a sentence, the mark of a smaller stop is put above it. Where one mark is put on the top of another, the former governs the latter. A warning not to stop is denoted by ۛ. The letter ر (*lāzim*) shows that a stop is absolutely necessary; otherwise the sense is spoilt. This is so important that it is also shown prominently in the margin as رقف لازم. ج (*jāiz*) shows that a stop is optional, but if you do not stop, the sense is not spoiled. There are other marks to show the extent to which a stop is permissible, e.g., for taking breath, etc., or where option is allowed, whether it is better to stop or not to stop. The latter ط (*muṭlaq*) denotes a full stop, i.e., the end of a sentence, but not the end of an argument, as in the case of a paragraph or section (ف),

DIVISIONS OF THE QURAN

The reading of the Qurān is considered a pious duty by every Muslim and is actually performed in practice by every literate person, man, woman, and child. For the convenience of those who wish to complete the whole reading in a given time, the whole Text is divided into thirty equal parts, or seven equal parts. The thirtieth Part is called *juz-un* in Arabic, and *Sipāra* or simply *Pāra* in Persian and Urdū. If you read a *Sipāra* every day, you complete the whole reading in a month of thirty days. The seventh part is called a *Mansil*. If one is read every day, the whole is completed in a week. Usually the arithmetical quarters of a *Sipāra* (one-fourth, one-half, three-quarters) are also marked in the Arabic copies as *Ar-rub'*, *An-nisf*, and *Ath-thalātha*.

According to subject matter, the division is different. The whole of the Qurān is arranged in 114 Sūras of very unequal size. The Sūras are numbered and the consecutive number is shown just before the title of the Sūra, both in Arabic and English. In Arabic, the figure just after the title shows the chronological order as usually accepted by Muslim writers. Each Sūra consists of a number of *Āyats*. Sūra I contains 7 *Āyats* and Sūra II contains 286. For the meaning of *Sūra* and *Āyat* see C. 42 n. The most convenient form of quotation is to name the Sūra and the *Āyat*: thus S. ii. 120 means the 120th *Āyat* of the second Sūra. A Sūra is usually spoken of as a Chapter in English, but that translation is hardly satisfactory. If you examine the order you will find that each Sūra is a step in a gradation. I have left the word untranslated, as a technical term in our religious literature. The *Āyat* or verse division is usually determined by the rhythm and cadence in the Arabic Text. Sometimes an *Āyat* contains many sentences. Sometimes a sentence is divided by a break in an *Āyat*. But usually there is a pause in meaning at the end of an *Āyat*.

A division of the Sūra into Sections is shown in all Arabic Texts. These are logical divisions according to meaning. The word translated "Section" is in Arabic *Rukū'* a "bowing of the head." The end of a *Rukū'* is shown in Arabic by ر. Usually three figures are written with ر. The top figure shows the number of *Rukū'*s completed in that Sūra. The middle figure shows the number of *Āyats* in the *Rukū'* just completed. The bottom figure shows the number of *Rukū'*s completed in that *Sipāra*, irrespective of Sūras. For example, the first ر in *Sipāra* II which continues Sūra II from *Sipāra* I is usually marked ر. It means that at that point 17 *Rukū'*s of Sūra II have been completed, that the *Rukū'* of which it marks the close contains 6 *Āyats*, and that it is the first *Rukū'* that falls in *Sipāra* II. I have further marked the sub-division of *Rukū'*s into shorter paragraphs where necessary, by using in the English text a bold flowery Initial: e.g., see the initial ر in ii. 6 or the initial ر in ii. 35.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

INTRODUCTION

- C. 1.—Glory to God the Most High, full of Grace and Mercy ;
He created All, including Man.
To Man He gave a special place in His Creation.
He honoured man to be His Agent,
And to that end, endued him with understanding,
Purified his affections, and gave him spiritual insight ;
So that man should understand Nature,
Understand himself,
And know God through His wondrous Signs,
And glorify Him in truth, reverence, and unity.
- C. 2.—For the fulfilment of this great trust
Man was further given a Will,
So that his acts should reflect God's universal Will and Law,
And his mind, freely choosing,
Should experience the sublime joy
Of being in harmony with the Infinite,
And with the great drama of the world around him,
And with his own spiritual growth.
- C. 3.—But, created though he was in the best of moulds,
Man fell from Unity when his Will was warped,
And he chose the path of Discord.
And sorrow and pain, selfishness and degradation,
Ignorance and hatred, despair and unbelief
Poisoned his life, and he saw shapes of evil
In the physical, moral, and spiritual world,
And in himself.
- C. 4.—Then did his soul rise against himself,
And his self-discord made discord between kith and kin,
And men began to fear the strong and oppress the weak,
To boast in prosperity, and curse in adversity,
And to flee each other, pursuing phantoms,
For the truth and reality of Unity
Was gone from their minds.
- C. 5.—When men spread themselves over the earth,
And became many nations,
Speaking diverse languages,
And observing diverse customs and laws ;

C. 5-7.]

The evils became multiplied,
As one race or nation
Became alienated from another.
The Brotherhood of Man was now doubly forgotten,—
Firstly, between individuals, and secondly, between nations.
Arrogance, selfishness, and untruth
Were sown and reaped in larger fields ;
And Peace, Faith, Love and Justice
Were obscured over masses of men,
As large tracts of land are starved
Of sunshine by clouds floating far on high.

C. 6.—But God in His infinite mercy and love,
Who forgives and guides individuals and nations,
And turns to good even what seems to us evil,
Never forsakes the struggling soul that turns to Him,
Nor the groups of men and women
Who join together to obey His Will and Law
And strengthen each other in unity and truth,
Nor the Nations that dwell
In mountain or valley, heat or cold,
In regions fertile or arid,
In societies that roam over land or seas,
Or hunt, or tend flocks, or till the soil,
Or seek the seas for food or oil or fat or gems,
Or dig out from the bowels of the earth
Precious stones or metals or stored-up heat and energy,
Or practise arts and crafts, or produce abundant wealth
By machines of ingenious workmanship,
Or live a frugal life of contemplation :
For all are children of One God,
And share His loving care
And must be brought within the pale
Of His eternal unity and harmony.

C. 7.—And so this light of eternal Unity
Has shone in all ages and among all nations,
Through chosen Apostles of God, who came
As men to dwell among men,
To share their joys and sorrows,
To suffer for them and with them,—
Aye, and to suffer more than falls
To ordinary mortal lot,—
That so their message and their life

Might fulfil the eternal
And unchanging purpose of the Most High,—
To lead man to his noblest destiny.

C. 8.—Ever this eternal light of Unity,
This mystic light of God's own Will,
Has shone and shines with undiminished splendour.
The names of many Messengers are inscribed
In the records of many nations and many tongues,
And many were the forms in which their message was delivered,
According to the needs of the times and the understanding of the people ;
And manifold were the lives of the Messengers,
And manifold also was the response of their people ;
But they all witnessed to the One Truth :
Of God's unity, might, grace and love.

C. 9.—As the records of man are imperfect,
And the memory of man unstable :
The names of many of these messengers
Are known in one place and not in another,
Or among one people and not among others ;
And some of their names may have perished utterly ;
But their message stands one and indivisible,
Even though it may have been forgotten,
Or twisted by ignorance, error, superstition or perversity ;
Or misunderstood in the blinding light
Or time or tortuous Circumstance.

C. 10.—Many were the faiths in the composite world
Of Western Asia, Northern Africa, and Europe,
And many were the fragments of ancient wisdom,
Saved, transformed, renewed or mingled ;
And many new streams of wisdom were poured through the crucibles
Of noble minds,—prophets, poets, preachers,
Philosophers, and thinking men of action ;
And many were the conflicts, and many
The noble attempts reaching out towards Unity,
And many were the subtle influences
Interchanged with the other worlds
Of further and Eastern Asia,—
Aye, and perchance with the scattered Isles
Of the Pacific and the world between
The Atlantic and the Pacific.

C. 11.—At length came the time when the Voice of Unity

Should speak and declare to the People,
Without the need of Priests or Priest-craft,
Without miracles save those that happen
Now and always in the spiritual world,
Without mystery, save those mysteries
Which unfold themselves in the growing
Inner experience of man and his vision of God,—
To declare with unfaltering voice
The Unity of God, the Brotherhood of Man,
And Grace and Mercy, Bounty and Love,
Poured out in unstinted measure for ever and ever.

C. 12.—And this great healing light shone
Among a people steeped in ignorance,
Brave and free, but without cohesion or union,
Simple and rude, but with an easy familiarity with Nature,
Accustomed to Nature's hardships and her rugged resistance to man,
But dreaming of the delights of gardens and fruitful fields,
Cruel, yet with a rough sense of equality,
And wielding a tongue, flexible, beautiful,
And able to respond, with brevity and eloquence,
To the sublimest thoughts which man could conceive.

C. 13.—Who were fit to be vehicles of this light ? —
Not men intoxicated with words and mysteries,
Men whom politics had debauched or tyranny had subdued,
Men whose refinement had ended in vices,
Who saw Nature only through books or artificial conceits,
Or in moods which bred softness, indolence, or luxury,
Who spoke of love and justice, but practised
Gross selfishness between class and class,
Sex and sex, condition and condition ;
And had perverted their language, once beautiful,
Into jargons of empty elegance and unmeaning futility.

C. 14.—For the glory of Hellas, and her freedom and wisdom had departed ;
Rome's great systems of law, organization and universal citizenship
Had sunk into the mire of ecclesiastical formalism,
And dogmatism, and exclusive arrogance ;
The living fire of Persia's Prophet scarce smouldered
In her votaries of luxury ;
In India, countless castes and kingdoms
Cancelled the unity of Buddha's teaching ;
The wounds of China had not yet been healed by T'ang culture ;
And Japan was still a disciple of China.

C. 15.—Then in the sacred city of pagan Arabia,
 Shone a light that spread in all directions.
 It was centrally placed for the bounds of the world
 Of men's habitations in Asia, Europe, and Africa.
 It made the Arabs the leading nation of culture and science,
 Of organized enterprise, law, and arts,
 With a zeal for the conquest of Nature and her mysteries.

C. 16.—Behold ! There was born into the world of sense
 The unlettered Apostle, the comely child,
 Noble of birth, but nobler still
 In the grace and wisdom of human love
 And human understanding ; dowered with the key
 Which opened to him the enchanted palace
 Of Nature ; marked out to receive—
 To receive and preach in burning words
 The spiritual truth and message of the Most High.

C. 17.—Others before him had been born
 In darkness, beyond the reach
 Of history ; others again it pleased God
 To send as Messengers, preaching, working
 In the dim twilight of history,
 Wherein men fashion legends
 After their own hearts, and dimly seek
 A light afar, remote from the lives,
 Mean and sordid, such as they knew.

C. 18.—But Muḥammad came in the fullest blaze
 Of history ; with no learning he put to shame
 The wisdom of the learned ; with pasture folk
 He lived and worked, and won their love ; in hills
 And valleys, caves and deserts, he wandered,
 But never lost his way to truth and righteousness ;
 From his pure and spotless heart the Angels washed
 Off the dust that flew around him ; through the ways
 Of crooked city folk, he walked upright and straight,
 And won from them the ungrudging name
 Of the Man of Faith¹ who never broke his word.

C. 19.—To the Praiseworthy² indeed be praise :
 Born in the Sacred City,³ he destroyed
 Its superstition ; loyal to his people to the core,

2. Muḥammad.

3. Mecca.

He stood for all humanity ; orphan-born
 And poor, he scorned the riches of the rich,
 And made his special care all those
 Whom the world neglected or oppressed,—
 Orphans, women, slaves, and those in need
 Of food or comforts, mental solace, spiritual strength,
 Or virtues down-trodden in the haunts of men.

C. 20.—His mother⁴ and his foster-mother⁵
 Loved and wondered at the child ;
 His grandfather, 'Abdul Muṭṭalib,
 Of all his twice-eight children and their offspring,
 Loved him best and all his sweet and gentle ways ;
 His uncle Abū Ṭālib, loth though he was
 To give up the cult of his fathers,
 Knew well the purity of Muḥammad's
 Mind and soul, and was his stoutest champion
 When the other chiefs of Mecca sought to kill
 The man who challenged in his person
 Their narrow Pagan selfish lives.

C. 21.—To his cousin 'Alī, the well-beloved,⁶
 Born when he was thirty, he appeared
 As the very pattern of a perfect man,
 As gentle as he was wise and true and strong,
 The one in whose defence and aid
 He spent his utmost strength and skill,
 Holding life cheap in support of a cause so high,
 And placing without reserve his chivalry,
 His prowess, his wit and learning, and his sword
 At the service of this mighty Messenger of God.

C. 22.—Not till the age of forty⁷ did he receive
 The Commission to stand forth and proclaim
 The Bounty of God, and His gift, to lowly Man,
 Of knowledge by Word and Pen ; but all through
 His years of preparation he did search
 The Truth : he sought it in Nature's forms and laws,
 Her beauty and her stern unflinching ways ;
 He sought it in the inner world
 Of human lives, men's joys and sorrows,
 Their kindly virtues and their sins

4. Āmina. 5. Ḥalima. 6. Murtadhā. 7. All ages in the life of our Lord Muḥammad are mentioned in lunar years.

Of pride, injustice, cruel wrong,
 And greed of gain, scarce checked by the inner voice
 That spoke of duty, moral law, and higher still,
 The Will Supreme of God, to which the will
 Of man must tune itself to find its highest bliss.

- C. 23.—But he grew steadfastly in virtue and purity ;
 Untaught by men, he learnt from them, and learned
 To teach them ; even as a boy of nine,
 When he went in a trade caravan with Abū Ṭālib
 To Syria,⁸ his tender soul marked inwardly
 How God did speak in the wide expanse
 Of deserts, in the stern grandeur of rocks,
 In the refreshing flow of streams, in the smiling
 Bloom of gardens, in the art and skill with which
 Men and birds and all life sought for light
 From the Life of Lives, even as every plant
 Seeks through devious ways the light of the Sun.
- C. 24.—Nor less was he grieved at Man's ingratitude
 When he rebelled and held as naught the Signs
 Of God, and turned His gifts to baser uses,
 Driving rarer souls to hermit life,
 Clouding the heavenly mirror of pure affections
 With selfish passions, mad unseemly wrangles,
 And hard unhallowed loathsome tortures of themselves.
- C. 25.—He worked, and joyed in honest labour ;
 He traded with integrity to himself and to others ;
 He joined the throngs of cities and their busy life,
 But saw its good and evil as types
 Of an inner and more lasting life hereafter ;
 People gladly sought his help as umpire
 And peacemaker because they knew his soul
 Was just and righteous : he loved the society
 Of old and young, but oft withdrew to solitude
 For Prayer and inward spiritual strength ;
 He despised not wealth but used it for others ;
 He was happy in poverty and used it as his badge

8. It was on such visits that he met and conversed with Nestorian Christian monks like Bahīrā, who were quick to recognize his spiritual worth. Perhaps the meeting was in Buṣrā ^{بُصْرَا} in the Jabal Druze district of Syria, some 80 miles south of Damascus. There was another Buṣrā in Edom, north of Petra in Transjordan. Buṣrā was famous for trade in costly red dyes, and is referred to as Bozrah in Isaiah, lxi, 1. Neither of these towns is to be confounded with the modern Bagra.

And his pride⁹ when wealth was within his reach
But not within his grasp, as a man among men.

- C. 26.—At twenty-five he was united in the holy bonds
Of wedlock with Kḥadija the Great, the noble lady
Who befriended him when he had no worldly resources,
Trusted him when his worth was little known,
Encouraged and understood him in his spiritual struggles,
Believed in him when with trembling steps
He took up the Call and withstood obloquy,
Persecution, insults, threats, and tortures,
And was a life-long help-mate till she was gathered
To the saints in his fifty-first year,—
A perfect woman, the mother of those that believe.

- C. 27.—There is a cave in the side of Mount Ḥiraa
Some three miles north of the City of Mecca,
In a valley which turns left from the road to 'Arafāt,
To which Muḥammad used to retire for peaceful contemplation:
Often alone, but sometimes with Kḥadija.
Days and nights he spent there with his Lord.
Hard were the problems he revolved in his mind,—
Harder and more cross-grained than the red granite
Of the rock around him,—problems not his own,
But his people's, yea, and of human destiny,
Of the mercy of God, and the age-long conflict
Of evil and righteousness, sin and abounding Grace.

- C. 28.—Not till forty years of earthly life had passed
That the veil was lifted from the Preserved Tablet
And its contents began to be transferred to the tablet of his mind,
To be proclaimed to the world, and read and studied
For all time,—a fountain of mercy and wisdom,
A warning to the heedless, a guide to the erring,
An assurance to those in doubt, a solace to the suffering,
A hope to those in despair,—to complete the chain
Of Revelation through the mouths
Of divinely inspired Apostles.

- C. 29.—The Chosen One¹⁰ was in the Cave of Ḥiraa.
For two years and more he had prayed there and adored
His Creator and wondered at the mystery
Of man with his corruptible flesh, just growing

9. *Alfāqrū fakhrī*: "Poverty is my pride."

10. *Muṣṭafā*.

Out of a clot, and the soul in him
 Reaching out to knowledge sublime, new
 And ever new, taught by the bounty
 Of God, and leading to that which man himself
 Knoweth not. And now, behold! a dazzling
 Vision of beauty and light overpowered his senses,
 And he heard the word "*Iqraa!*"

- C. 30.—"*Iqraa!*"—which being interpreted may mean
 "Read!" or "Proclaim!" or "Recite!"
 The unlettered Apostle was puzzled;
 He could not read. The Angel seemed
 To press him to his breast in a close embrace,
 And the cry rang clear "*Iqraa!*"
 And so it happened three times; until
 The first overpowering sensation yielded
 To a collected grasp of the words which made clear
 His Mission; its Author, God the Creator;
 Its subject, Man, God's wondrous handiwork,
 Capable, by Grace, of rising to heights sublime;
 And the instrument of that mission, the sanctified Pen,
 And the sanctified Book, the Gift of God,
 Which men might read, or write, or study, or treasure in their souls.

- C. 31.—The veil was lifted from the Chosen One's eyes,
 And his soul for a moment was filled with divine
 Ecstasy... When this passed,
 And he returned to the world of Time
 And Circumstance and this world of Sense,
 He felt like one whose eyes had seen
 A light of dazzling beauty, and felt dazed
 On his return to common sights.
 The darkness now seemed tenfold dark;
 The solitude seemed tenfold empty;
 The Mount of Hira, henceforth known
 As the Mountain of Light,¹¹ the mere shell
 Of an intense memory. Was it a dream?
 Terror seized his limbs and he straightway sought
 Her who shared his inmost life,
 And told her of his sense of exaltation,
 And the awful void when the curtain closed.

- C. 32.—She understood, rejoiced, and comforted him;
 Gave strength to his shaken senses;

11. Jabal-un-Nūr,

Wrapped up in warmth his shivering body,
 Unused as yet to bear the strain and stress
 Of an experience rare to mortal men.
 She knew it was no dream or delusion.
 She went and consulted her cousin Waraqa,
 A devout worshipper of God in the Faith of Christ,
 Learned in spiritual lore. He listened
 And with her rejoiced that he, Muḥammad,
 Was God's Chosen One to renew the Faith.

- C. 33.—She said : Blessed be thou, Chosen One!
 Do we not see thy inner life,— true and pure?
 Do not all see thy outer life,— kind and gentle?—
 Loyal to kin, hospitable to strangers?
 No thought of harm or mischief ever stained thy mind
 Nor word ever passed thy lips that was not true
 Or stilled not the passions of narrower men.
 Ever ready in the service of God, thou art he
 Of whom I bear witness : there's no God but He,
 And thou art His chosen Apostle.

- C. 34.—Khadija believed, exalted in faith
 Above all women; 'Alī, the well-beloved,
 Then a child of ten, but lion-hearted,
 Plighted his faith, and became from that moment
 The right hand of Islam; Abū Bakr, the Sincere,¹²
 The True-hearted, the man of wealth and influence,
 Who used both without stint for the Cause,
 The sober Counsellor, the inseparable friend,
 Never hesitated to declare his faith;
 And Zaid, the freedman of Muḥammad,
 Counted his freedom as naught compared
 With the service of Muḥammad and Islam.
 These were the first fruits of the mission:
 A woman, a child, a man of affairs, and a freedman,
 All banded together in the equality of Islam.

- C. 35.—The revelation had come, the mission
 And the inspiration. But what was it leading to?
 It was a miracle, but not in the sense
 Of a reversing of Nature; Muṣṭafā's vision
 Was linked with Eternity, but he was no soothsayer
 Foretelling passing events; the mysteries

12. Ṣadiq or Ṣiddiq, the title of Abū Bakr.

Of knowledge were being opened out, but his message
 Was no mere esoteric doctrine, to be grasped
 By a few in contemplation, fleeing from action ;
 Nor was it the practice of single or social monasticism,
 Undisturbed by the whims or passions of life.
 He was asked to stand forth, to preach, to declare
 The One Universal God, the Gracious, the Merciful,
 And to lead men to the Right and forbid the Wrong.

C. 36.—The wrong?—The selfish pride of birth,
 The massing of power and wealth in the hands
 Of a few, the slaughter of female infants,
 The orgies of gambling and drunkenness,
 The frauds of temples and idols and priests,
 The feuds and arrogance of tribes and races,
 The separation of Sacred and Profane,
 As if the unity of All Life and all Truth
 Did not flow from the unity of God Most High.

C. 37.—He was loyal to his family, but could he support
 Their monopoly of power?—To his tribe,
 But were the Quraish the only creatures
 Of God?—To the temple of Mecca, but
 Could he wink at Lāt and 'Uzzā, and the other monsters,
 Whose worship killed the spiritual growth of Man?—
 To the earlier Revelations, but could he hold
 With the superstitions and falsehoods, the dogmas and creeds
 Which went against reason and nature, and the inner light
 Which was now fanned into flame by the Will of God?

C. 38.—And so his very virtues and loyalties pointed
 To offence and conflict, mockery and misrepresentation,
 Hatred and persecution, threats, tortures, and exile
 For him and his, and martyrdoms, wars, revolutions,
 And the shaking of the foundations of history
 And the social order. But Islam meant
 The willing submission of his will to God,
 The active attainment of Peace through Conflict.

C. 39.—And he gave that submission, not without effort,
 Even as Moses¹³ did before him,
 And Jesus¹⁴ in the agony of the garden of Gethsemane.

13. Qurān xx, 25-32,

14. Matt. xxvi, 39,

C. 40.—For three and twenty years, in patience,
Conflict, hope, and final triumph,
Did this Man of God receive
And teach the Message of the Most High.
It came, like the fruit of the soul's own yearning,
To teach profound spiritual truths,
Answer questionings, appeal to men
In their doubts and fears, help and put heart
In them in moments of trial, and ordain
For them laws by which they could live
In society lives of purity goodness and peace.

C 41.—These messages came as inspiration
To Muḥammad as the need arose,
On different occasions and in different places :
He recited them, and they were recorded
By the Pen : they were imprinted on his heart
And mind, and on the memory
Of his loving disciples : as the body
Of sacred Scripture grew, it was arranged
For purposes of public prayer and reading :
This is the Book, or the Reading, or the Qurān.



INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA I (*Fātiḥa*)

C. 42.—First comes that beautiful Sūra,¹⁵

The Opening Chapter¹⁶ of Seven Verses,¹⁷
 Rightly called the Essence of the Book.
 It teaches us the Perfect prayer.
 For if we can pray aright, it means
 That we have some knowledge of God
 And His attributes, of His relations
 To us and His creation, which includes
 Ourselves; that we glimpse the source
 From which we come, and that final goal
 Which is our spiritual destiny
 Under God's true judgment: then
 We offer ourselves to God and seek His light.

C. 43.—Prayer is the heart of Religion and Faith

But how shall we pray? What words shall convey
 The yearnings of our miserable ignorant hearts
 To the Knower of all? Is it worthy of Him
 Or of our spiritual nature to ask
 For vanities, or even for such physical needs
 As our daily bread? The Inspired One
 Taught us a Prayer that sums up our faith,
 Our hope, and our aspiration in things that matter.
 We think in devotion of God's name and His Nature;
 We praise Him for His creation and His Cherishing care;
 We call to mind the Realities, seen and unseen;
 We offer Him worship and ask for His guidance;
 And we know the straight from the crooked path
 By the light of His grace that illumines the righteous.

15. Each chapter or portion of the Qurān is called a Sūra, which means a Degree or Step, by which we mount up. Sometimes whole Sūras were revealed, and sometimes portions, which were arranged together according to subject-matter under the Apostle's directions. Some Sūras are long, and some are short, but a logical thread runs through them all. Each verse of the Sūra is called an *Ayat* (plural, *Āyāt*), which means also a sign. A verse of revelation is a Sign of God's wisdom and goodness just as much as God's beautiful handiwork in the material creation or His dealings in history are signs to us, if we would understand. Some *Āyats* are long, and some are short. The *Āyat* is the true unit of the Qurān.

16. *Fātiḥa*=Opening Chapter.

17. These seven verses form a complete unit by themselves, and are recited in every prayer and on many other occasions, Cf. Q. xv. 87.

Sūra I

Fatiḥa, or the Opening Chapter.¹⁸

1. In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.¹⁹

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

2. Praise be to God,
The Cherisher and Sustainer²⁰ of
the Worlds ;

١- الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ٥

3. Most Gracious, Most Merciful ;

٢- الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٥

4. Ruler of the Day of Judgment.

٣- مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ٥

5. Thee do we worship,²¹
And Thine aid we seek.

٤- إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ٥

18. By universal consent it is rightly placed at the beginning of the Qurān, as summing up, in marvellously terse and comprehensive words, man's relation to God in contemplation and prayer. In our spiritual contemplation the first words should be those of praise. If the praise is from our inmost being, it brings us into union with God's will. Then our eyes see all good, peace and harmony. Evil, rebellion, and conflict are purged out. They do not exist for us, for our eyes are lifted up above them in praise. Then we see God's attributes better (verses 2-4). This leads us to the attitude of worship and acknowledgment (verse 5). And finally comes prayer for guidance, and a contemplation of what guidance means (verses 6-7).

God needs no praise, for He is above all praise ; He needs no petition, for He knows our needs better than we do ourselves ; and His bounties are open without asking, to the righteous and the sinner alike. The prayer is for our own spiritual education, consolation, and confirmation.

That is why the words in this Sūra are given to us in the form in which we should utter them. When we reach enlightenment, they flow spontaneously from us.

19. The Arabic words "*Raḥmān*" and "*Raḥīm*", translated "Most Gracious" and "Most Merciful" are both intensive forms referring to different aspects of God's attribute of Mercy. The Arabic intensive is more suited to express God's attributes than the superlative degree in English. The latter implies a comparison with other beings, or with other times or places, while there is no being like unto God, and He is independent of Time and Place. Mercy may imply pity, long-suffering, patience, and forgiveness, all of which the sinner needs and God Most Merciful bestows in abundant measure. But there is a Mercy that goes before even the need arises, the Grace which is ever watchful, and flows from God Most Gracious to all His creatures, protecting them, preserving them, guiding them, and leading them to clearer light and higher life. To make us contemplate these boundless gifts of God, the formula : "In the name of God Most Gracious, Most Merciful" : is placed before every Sūra of the Qurān (except the ninth), and repeated at the beginning of every act by the Muslim who dedicates his life to God, and whose hope is in His Mercy.

Opinion is divided whether the *Bismillāh* should be numbered as a separate verse or not. It is unanimously agreed that it is a part of the Qurān. Therefore it is better to give it an independent number in the first Sūra. For subsequent Sūras it is treated as an introduction or head-line, and therefore not numbered.

20. The Arabic word *Rabb*, usually translated Lord, has also the meaning of cherishing, sustaining, bringing to maturity. God cares for all the worlds He has created. There are many worlds,—astronomical and physical worlds, worlds of thought, spiritual worlds, and so on. In every one of them, God is all in all. We express only one aspect of it when we say : "In Him we live, and move, and have our being."

21. On realizing in our souls God's love and care, His grace and mercy, and His power and justice (as Ruler of the Day of Judgment), the immediate result is that we bend in the act of worship, and see both our shortcomings and His all-sufficient power. The emphatic form means that not only do we reach the position of worshipping God and asking for His help, but we worship Him alone and ask for His aid only. For there is none other than He worthy of our devotion and able to help us. The plural "we" indicates that we associate ourselves with all who seek God, thus strengthening ourselves and strengthening them in a fellowship of faith.

6. Show²² us the straight way,

۞ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝

7. The way of those on whom
Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace,
Not of those
Whose portion is Wrath²³
Nor of those who stray.²⁴

۞ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ غَيْرِ
الْمُضْطَرِّبِينَ ۚ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ۚ

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA II (*Baqara*)

As the Opening Chapter sums up in seven beautiful verses the essence of the Qurān, so this Chapter sums up in 286 verses the whole teaching of the Qurān. It is a closely reasoned argument.

It begins (verses 1-29) with mystic doctrine as to the three kinds of men and how they receive God's message.

This leads to the story of the creation of man, the high destiny intended for him, his fall, and the hope held out to him (vv. 30-39).

Israel's story is then told according to their own records and traditions—what privileges they received and how they abused them (vv. 40-86), thus illustrating again as by a parable the general story of man.

In particular, reference is made to Moses and Jesus and their struggles with an unruly people: how the people of the Book played false with their own lights and in their pride rejected Muḥammad, who came in the true line of apostolic succession (vv. 87-121).

They falsely laid claim to the virtues of Father Abraham: he was indeed a righteous Imām, but he was the progenitor of Ismā'il's line (Arabs) as well as of Israel's line, and he with Ismā'il built the Ka'ba (Temple of Mecca) and purified it, thus establishing a common religion, of which Islam is the universal exponent (vv. 122-141).

The Ka'ba was now to be the centre of universal worship and the symbol of Islamic unity (vv. 142-167).

The Islamic *Ummat* (brotherhood) having thus been established with its definite centre and symbol, ordinances are laid down for the social life of the community, with the

22. If we translate by the English word "guide", we shall have to say: "Guide us to and in the straight Way." For we may be wandering aimlessly, and the first step is to find the Way; and the second need is to keep in the Way: our own wisdom may fail in either case. The straight Way is often the narrow Way, or the steep Way, which many people shun (Q. xc, 11). By the world's perversity the straight Way is sometimes stigmatized and the crooked Way praised. How are we to judge? We must ask for God's guidance. With a little spiritual insight we shall see which are the people who walk in the light of God's grace, and which are those that walk in the darkness of Wrath. This also would help our judgment.

23. Note that the words relating to Grace are connected actively with God; those relating to Wrath are impersonal. In the one case God's Mercy encompasses us beyond our deserts. In the other case our own actions are responsible for the Wrath,—the negative of Grace, Peace or Harmony.

24. Are there two categories?—those who are in the darkness of Wrath and those who stray? If so, the first are in greater spiritual danger than the second. The first are those who deliberately break God's law; the second those who stray out of carelessness or negligence. Both are responsible for their own acts or omissions. In opposition to both are the people who are in the light of God's Grace: for His Grace not only protects them from active wrong (if they will only submit their will to Him) but also from straying into paths of temptation or carelessness.

proviso (v. 177) that righteousness does not consist in formalities, but in faith, kindness, prayer, charity, probity, and patience under suffering. The ordinances relate to food and drink, bequests, fasts, *jihād*, wine and gambling, treatment of orphans and women, etc. (vv. 168-242).

Lest the subject of *jihād* should be misunderstood, it is taken up again in the story of Saul, Goliath and David, in contrast to the story of Jesus (vv. 243-253).

And so the lesson is enforced that true virtue lies in practical deeds of manliness, kindness, and good faith (vv. 254-283), and God's nature is called to mind in the sublime *Āyat-ul-Kursi*, the Verse of the Throne (v. 255).

The Chapter ends with an exhortation to Faith, Obedience, a sense of Personal Responsibility, and Prayer (vv. 284-286).

This is the longest Chapter of the Qurān, and in it occurs the longest verse (v. 282). The name of the Chapter is from the Parable of the Heifer in vv. 67-71, which illustrates the insufficiency of carping obedience. When faith is lost, people put off obedience with various excuses; even when at last they obey in the letter, they fail in the spirit, which means that they get fossilized, and their self-sufficiency prevents them from seeing that spiritually they are not alive but dead. For life is movement, activity, striving, fighting against baser things. And this is the burden of the Chapter.

C 44.—The Message of God is a guide that is sure

(ii. 1-29) To those who seek His light. But those
 Who reject faith are blind: their hearts
 Are sealed. Woe to the hypocrites,
 Self-deceived and deceiving others,
 With mockery on their lips, and mischief
 In their hearts, and fear; the clouds
 That bring fertilizing rain to others,
 To them bring but deafening thunder-peals
 And lightning flashes blinding to their eyes.

Sūra II,

Baqara, or The Heifer.

In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. **A. L. M.**²⁵

2. This is the Book;
In it is guidance sure, without doubt,
To those who fear²⁶ God;

3. Who believe in the Unseen,
Are steadfast in prayer
And spend out of what We
Have provided for them;²⁷

4. And who believe in the Revelation
Sent to thee,



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

١- اَلَمْ ؕ

٢- ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ ؕ

هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ؕ

٣- الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْْبِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ

الصَّلٰوةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ؕ

٤- وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِمَا اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ وَ

25. These are abbreviated letters, the *Muqatta'at*, on which a general discussion will be found in Appendix I (to be printed at the end of this Sūra).

The particular letters, A L M., are found prefixed to this Sūra, and Sūras iii, xxix, xxx, xxxi and xxxii (six in all). In ii and iii the argument is about the rise and fall of nations, their past, and their future in history, with ordinances for the new universal People of Islam. In xxix a similar argument about nations leads off to the mystery of Life and Death, Failure and Triumph, Past and Future, in the history of individual souls. The burden of xxx is that God is the source of all things and all things return to Him. In xxxi and xxxii the same lesson is enforced: God is the Creator and He will be the Judge on the Last Day. There is therefore a common thread, the mystery of Life and Death, Beginning and End.

Much has been written about the meaning of these letters, but most of it is pure conjecture. Some commentators are content to recognize them as some mystic symbols, of which it is unprofitable to discuss the meaning by mere verbal logic. In mysticism we accept symbols as such for the time being: their esoteric meaning comes from the inner light when we are ready for it.

Among the conjectures there are two plausible theories. One is that each initial represents an attribute of God. Among the attributes it is not difficult to select three which will fit in with these letters. Another theory, favoured by Baidhāwī, is that these letters are the initial, the final and the middle (or again the initial) letter of three names: Allah, Jibrail, and Muhammad,—the source of revelation, the heavenly Messenger who brought it, and the human Messenger through whom it was promulgated in human speech. This might be appropriate to the first Sūra (which Baqara really is if we treat Fatiha as a Preface): but if it was prefixed to others, why to these six only?

If we look to the nature of the sounds which the letters represent, A is a breathing and comes from the throat, L is a lingual-palatal-dental sound from the middle of the mouth, and M is a labial or lip-sound. Can we not take them as symbolical of the Beginning, Middle and End? If so, are they not appropriate to the Sūras which treat specifically of Life, Growth, and Death—the Beginning and the End? In the New Testament Greek scripture, the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet, Alpha and Omega, are symbolical of the Beginning and the End, and give one of the titles of God: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." (Rev. i. 8.) The symbolism of the three things is better with three letters.

26. *Taqwā*, and the verbs and nouns connected with the root, signify: (1) the fear of God, which, according to the writer of Proverbs (i. 7) in the Old Testament, is the beginning of Wisdom; (2) restraint, or guarding one's tongue, hand, and heart from evil; (3) hence, righteousness, piety, good conduct. All these ideas are implied: in the translation, only one or other of these ideas can be indicated, according to the context.

27. All bounties proceed from God. They may be physical gifts, e.g., food, clothing, houses, gardens, wealth, etc., or intangible gifts, e.g., influence, power, birth and the opportunities flowing from it, health, talents, etc., or spiritual gifts, e.g., insight into good and evil, understanding of men, the capacity for love, etc. We are to use all in humility and moderation. But we are also to give out of every one of them something that contributes to the well-being of others. We are to be neither ascetics nor luxurious sybarites, neither selfish misers nor thoughtless prodigals.

And before thy time,
And (in their hearts)
Have the assurance of the
Hereafter.²⁸

مَا أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۖ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ
يُوقِنُونَ ۝

5. They are on the right path,
Guided by their Lord,
And they shall prosper.²⁹

هـ- أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ
هُمْ الْمُتَّقُونَ ۝

6. As to those who reject Faith,³⁰
It is all the same to them
Whether thou warn them
Or do not warn them;
They will not believe.

و- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
أَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنْذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝

7. God hath set a seal³¹
On their hearts and on their hearing,
And on their eyes is a veil;
Great is the penalty they (incur).³²

ز- خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ
وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝

SECTION 2.

8. Of the people there are some
who say:³³
"We believe in God and the Last
Day;"
But they do not (really) believe.

ح- وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَ
بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

9. Fain would they deceive
God and those who believe,
But they only deceive themselves,
And how little they perceive!

ط- يَخِيدُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا
يَنْدَعُونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۝

10. In their hearts is a disease;

١- فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا

28. Righteousness comes from a secure Faith, from sincere devotion to God, and from unselfish service to Man.

29. Prosperity must be taken as referring to all the kinds of bounty which we discussed in the note to v. 3 above. The right use of one kind leads to an increase in that and other kinds, and that is prosperity.

30. *Kafara*, *kufr*, *kāfir*, and derivative forms of the word, imply a deliberate rejection of Faith as opposed to a mistaken idea of God or faith, which is not inconsistent with an earnest desire to see the truth. Where there is such desire, the grace and mercy of God gives guidance. But that guidance is not efficacious when it is deliberately rejected, and the possibility of rejection follows from the grant of free will. The consequence of the rejection is that the spiritual faculties become dead or impervious to better influences. See also n. to v. 88.

31. All actions are referred to God. Therefore when we get the penalty of our deliberate sin, and our senses become impervious to good, the penalty is referred to the justice of God.

32. The penalty here is the opposite of the prosperity referred to in v. 5. As we go down the path of sin, our penalty gathers momentum, just as goodness brings its own capacity for greater goodness.

33. We now come to a third class of people, the hypocrites. They are untrue to themselves, and therefore their hearts are disensed (v. 10). The disease tends to spread, like all evil. They are curable; but if they harden their hearts, they soon pass into the category of those who deliberately reject light.

And God has increased the
disease:³⁴
And grievous is the penalty they
(incur),
Because they are false
(to themselves).

وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۖ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَكْفُرُونَ ○

11. When it is said to them :
"Make not mischief on the earth,"
They say : "Why, it is we
Who want to make peace !"

۝ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ○

12. Of a surety, they are the ones
Who make mischief,
But they do not perceive.³⁵

۝ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِنْ لَا
يَشْعُرُونَ ○

13. When it is said to them :
"Believe as the others believe :"
They say : "Shall we believe
As the fools believe ?"—
Nay, of a surety they are the fools,
But they do not know.³⁶

۝ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ
قَالُوا أَتُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ
هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ○

14. When they meet those who believe,³⁷
They say : "We believe ;"
But when they are alone
With their evil ones,
They say : "We are really with you :
We were only jesting."

۝ وَإِذَا لقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا
خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شُيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا مَعَكُمْ
إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ ○

15. God will throw back
Their mockery on them,
And give them rope in their
trespasses ;
So they will wander like blind ones
(To and fro).

۝ اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ
يَعْمَهُونَ ○

16. These are they who have bartered
Guidance for error :

۝ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ

34. The insincere man who thinks he can get the best of both worlds by compromising with good and evil only increases the disease of his heart, because he is not true to himself. Even the good which comes to him he can pervert to evil. So the rain which fills out the ear of corn or lends fragrance to the rose also lends strength to the thorn or adds strength to the poison of the deadly-night-shade.

35. Much mischief is caused (sometimes unwittingly) by people who think that they have a mission of peace, when they have not even a true perception of right and wrong. By their blind arrogance they depress the good and encourage the evil.

36. This is another phase of the hypocrite and the cynic. "Faith," he says, "is good enough for fools." But his cynicism may be the greatest folly in the eyes of God.

37. A deeper phase of insincerity is actual duplicity. But it never pays in the end. If we compare such a man to a trader, he loses in the bargain.

But their traffic is profitless,
And they have lost true direction.

17. Their similitude is that of a man³⁸
Who kindled a fire;
It lighted all around him,
But God took away their light
And left them in utter darkness,
So they could not see.

18. Deaf, dumb, and blind,
They will not return to the path.

19. Or another similitude³⁹
Is that of a rain-laden cloud
From the sky : in it are zones
of darkness, and thunder and
lightning :
They press their fingers in their ears
To keep out the stunning thunder-
clap,
The while they are in terror of
death.
But God is ever round
The rejecters of Faith !

20. The lightning all but snatches away
Their sight; every time the light
Helps them, they walk therein,
And when the darkness grows on
them,
They stand still.
And if God willed, He could take
away
Their faculty of hearing and seeing,
For God hath power over all things.

فَمَا رِبَحَتْ تجارتكم وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ٥

١٤- مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمٍ لَا يَبْصُرُونَ ٥

١٨- صُمُّوا بكمْ عَمَى فهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ٥

١٩- أَوْ كَصَيِّبٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ ٥

٢٠- يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ٥

38. The man wanted light; he only kindled a fire. It produced a blaze, and won the applause of all around. But it did not last long. When the flame went out as was inevitable, the darkness was worse than before. And they all lost their way. So hypocrisy, deception, arrogant compromise with evil, cynicism, or duplicity may win temporary applause. But the true light of faith and sincerity is wanting, and therefore it must mislead and ruin all concerned. In the consternation they cannot speak or hear each other, and of course they cannot see; so they end like the deliberate rejecters of Faith (v. 7), wildly groping about, dumb, deaf and blind.

39. A wonderfully graphic and powerful simile applying to those who reject Faith. In their self-sufficiency they are undisturbed normally. But what happens when a great storm breaks over them? They cover their ears against thunder-claps, and the lightning nearly blinds them. They are in mortal fear, but God encompasses them around—even them, for He at all times encompasses all. He gives them rope. In the intervals of deafening noise and blinding flashes, there are moments of steady light, and these creatures take advantage of them, but again they are plunged into darkness. Perhaps they curse; perhaps they think that the few moments of effective light are due to their own intelligence! How much wiser would they be if they humbled themselves and sought the light of God!

SECTION 3,

21. Oh ye people!

Adore your Guardian-Lord,
Who created you
And those who came before you,
That ye may have the chance
To learn righteousness;⁴⁰

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي
خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَّقُونَ ٢١

22. Who had made the earth your couch,

And the heavens your canopy;
And sent down rain from the
heavens,
And brought forth therewith
Food for your sustenance;
Then set not up rivals⁴¹ unto God
When ye know (the truth).

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ
بِنَاءً ۖ وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ
بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ ۖ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا
لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا ۚ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ٢٢

23. And if ye are in doubt

As to what We have revealed
From time to time to Our servant,
Then produce a Sūra
Like therunto;
And call your witnesses or helpers
(If there are any) besides God,
If your (doubts) are true.⁴²

وَأِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ
عَبْدِنَا فَاتَّبُوا لِسُورَةٍ مِنْ مِثْلِهِ ۚ وَادْعُوا
شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ ٢٣

24. But if ye cannot —

And of a surety ye cannot—
Then fear the Fire
Whose fuel is Men and Stones,—
Which is prepared for those

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ
الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارُ ۚ أُعِدَّتْ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ ٢٤

40. For Taqwā see ii. 2 n. I connect this dependent clause with "adore, etc." above, though it could be connected with "created". According to my construction the argument will be as follows. Adoration is the act of the highest and humblest reverence and worship. When you get into that relationship with God, who is your Creator and Guardian, your faith produces works of righteousness. It is a chance given you: will you exercise your free will and take it? If you do, your whole nature will be transformed.

41. Further proofs of God's goodness to you are given in this verse. Your whole life, physical and spiritual, depends upon Him. The spiritual is figured by the Canopy of Heaven. The truth has been brought plainly before you. Will you still resist it and go after false gods, the creation of your own fancy? The false gods may be idols, superstitions, Self, or even great or glorious things like Poetry, Art, or Science, when set up as rivals to God. They may be pride of race, pride of birth, pride of wealth or position, pride of power, pride of learning, or even spiritual pride.

42. How do we know that there is revelation, and that it is from God? Here is a concrete test. The Teacher of God's Truth has placed before you many Sūras. Can you produce one like it? If there is any one besides God, who can inspire spiritual truth in such noble language, produce your evidence. Or is it that your doubts are merely argumentative, refractory, against your own inner light, or conscience? All true revelation is itself a miracle, and stands on its own merits.

Who reject Faith.⁴³

25. But give glad tidings
To those who believe
And work righteousness,
That their portion is Gardens,
Beneath which rivers flow.
Every time they are fed
With fruits therefrom,
They say: "Why, this is
What we were fed with before,"
For they are given things in
similitude;)
And they have therein
Companions pure (and holy);⁴⁴
And they abide therein (for ever).

٢٥- وَيُبَشِّرُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرٍ رِزْقًا ۖ قَالُوا
هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۖ وَأُتُوا بِهِ
مُتَشَابِهًا
وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ ۖ وَهُمْ
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ۝

26. God disdains not to use
The similitude of things,
Lowest⁴⁵ as well as highest.

٢٦- إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا

43. If by your own efforts you cannot match the spiritual light, and yet contumaciously reject spiritual Faith, then there will be a fire in your souls, the Punishment that burns up all your cherished idols. Perhaps you will at least fear this penalty, which your self-loving souls can understand. This fire consumes both the worshippers of the False and the Idols which they falsely worship. Can this bring them to their senses? Its power is not only over the feeling, palpitating heart of man (heart in a spiritual sense, as it persists long after the physical heart), but he cannot escape from it even if he imagines himself reduced to inertness like stocks or stones; for it is all-devouring.

44. This is the antithesis to the last verse. If fire is the symbol of Punishment, the Garden is the symbol of felicity. And what can be more delightful than a Garden where you observe from a picturesque height a beautiful landscape round you,—rivers flowing with crystal water, and fruit trees of which the choicest fruit is before you. The fruit of goodness is goodness, similar, but choicer in every degree of ascent. You think it is the same, but it is because of your past experiences and associations of memory. Then there is companionship. If sex is suggested, its physical associations are at once negated by the addition of the word *Muṭahharatun*, "pure and holy". The Arabic epithet is in the intensive form, and must be translated by two adjectives denoting purity in the highest degree. The Companionship is that of souls and applies to both sexes in the physical world of men and women. And this felicity is not a mere passing phase but will abide beyond the realms of Time.

45. The word for "the lowest" in the original Arabic means a gnat, a bye-word in the Arabic language for the weakest of creatures. In Q. xxix. 41, which was revealed before this Sūra, the similitude of the Spider was used, and similarly in xxii. 73, there is the similitude of the Fly. For similitudes taken from magnificent forces of nature, expressed in exalted language, see v. 19 above. To God all His creation has some special meaning appropriate to itself, and some of what we consider the lowest creatures have wonderful aptitudes, e.g., the spider or the fly. Parables like these may be an occasion of stumbling to those "who forsake the path"; in other words those who deliberately shut their eyes to God's Signs, and their Penalty is attributed to God, the Cause of all causes. But lest there should be misunderstanding, it is immediately added that the stumbling and offence only occur as the result of the sinner's own choice of the wrong course. I.v. 26 and 27 form one sentence and should be read together. "Forsaking the path" is defined in v. 27; viz., breaking solemn covenants which the sinner's own soul had ratified, causing division among mankind, who were meant to be one brotherhood, and doing as much mischief as possible in the life on this earth, for the life beyond will be on another plane, where no rope will be given to evil.

The mention of the Covenant (v. 27) has a particular and a general signification. The particular one has reference to the Jewish tradition that a Covenant was entered into with "Father Abraham" that in return for God's favours the seed of Abraham would serve God faithfully. But as a matter of fact a great part of Abraham's progeny were in constant spiritual rebellion against God, as is testified by their own Prophets and Preachers and by Muhammad Muṣaffā. The general signification is that a similar Covenant is metaphorically entered into by every creature of God: for God's loving care, we at least owe Him the fullest gratitude and willing obedience. The Sinner, before he darkens his own conscience, knows this, and yet he not only "forsakes the path" but resists the Grace of God which comes to save him. That is why his case becomes hopeless. But the loss is his own. He cannot spoil God's design. The good man is glad to retrace his steps from any lapses of which he may have been guilty, and in his case God's Message reclaims him with complete understanding.

Those who believe know
That it is truth from their Lord ;
But those who reject Faith say :
"What means God by this

similitude?"

By it He causes many to stray,
And many He leads into the right
path ;

But He causes not to stray,
Except those who forsake (the)
path,—

27. Those who break God's Covenant
After it is ratified,
And who sunder what God
Has ordered to be joined,
And do mischief on earth :
These cause loss (only) to
themselves.

28. How can ye reject⁴⁶
The faith in God?—
Seeing that ye were without life,
And He gave you life ;
Then will He cause you to die,
And will again bring you to life :
And again to Him will ye return.

29. It is He Who hath created for you
All things that are on earth ;
Moreover His design comprehended
the heavens,
For He gave order and perfection
To the seven firmaments ;
And of all things
He hath perfect knowledge.

مَا بَعْضُهُ فَمَا لَوَفَّيْنَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ؕ وَأَمَّا
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ
بِهَذَا مَثَلًا ۖ يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا ۖ وَيَهْدِي
بِهِ كَثِيرًا ۖ
وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ ۝

٢٧- الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مِيثَاقِهِ ۖ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَن
يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ۝

٢٨- كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَانًا
فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ
إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ۝

٢٩- هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ
سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ ۚ
وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۝

C. 45.—Yet man! What wonderful destiny

(cf. 30-39.) Is thine! Created to be

God's vicegerent on earth!

A little higher than angels!

46. In the preceding verses God has used various arguments: He has recalled His goodness (vv. 21-22): resolved doubts (v. 23): plainly set forth the penalty of wrong-doing (v. 24): given glad tidings (v. 25): shown how misunderstandings arise from a deliberate rejection of the light and breach of the Covenant (vv. 26-27). Now (vv. 28-29). He pleads with His creatures and appeals to their own subjective feelings. He brought you into being. The mysteries of life and death are in His hands. When you die on this earth, that is not the end. You were of Him, and you must return to Him. Look around you and realize your own dignity: it is from Him. The immeasurable depths of space above and around you may stagger you. They are part of His plan. What you have imagined as the seven firmaments (and any other scheme you may construct) bears witness to His design of order and perfection, for His knowledge (unlike yours) is all-comprehending. And yet will you deliberately reject or obscure or deaden the faculty of Faith which has been put into you?

Beguiled by evil, set for a season
 On this earth on probation
 To purge thy stain, with the promise
 Of guidance and hope from on high,
 From the Oft-returning, Merciful!
 Wilt thou choose right and regain
 Thy spiritual home with God?

SECTION 4.

30. Said thy Lord to the Angels:

"I will create
 "A vicegerent on earth." They said:
 "Wilt Thou place therein one who
 will make
 Mischief therein and shed blood?—
 Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises
 And glorify Thy holy (name)?"
 He said: "I know what ye know
 not."⁴⁷

۳۰- وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّیْ جَاعِلٌ
 فِی الْاَرْضِ خَلِیْفَةًۭ ۚ قَالُوْۤا اَتَجْعَلُ فِیْهَا
 مَنْ یُّفْسِدُ فِیْهَا وَیَسْفِكُ الدِّیْمٰۤءَ وَ
 نَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۗ قَالَ
 اِنِّیْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝

31. And He taught Adam the nature
- ⁴⁸

Of all things; then He placed them
 Before the angels, and said: "Tell
 Me
 The nature of these if ye are right."

۳۱- وَعَلَّمَ اٰدَمَ الْاَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ
 عَلَی الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ فَقَالَ اَنْبِئُوْنِیْ بِاَسْمَآءِ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ
 اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِیْنَ ۝

32. They said: "Glory to Thee: Of knowledge

۳۲- قَالُوْۤا سُبْحٰنَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَاۤ اِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا

47. It would seem that the Angels, though holy and pure, and endued with power from God, yet represented only one side of Creation. We may imagine them without passion or emotion, of which the highest flower is love. If man was to be endued with emotions, those emotions could lead him to the highest and drag him to the lowest. The power of will or choosing would have to go with them, in order that man might steer his own bark. This power of will (when used aright) gave him to some extent a mastery over his own fortunes and over nature, thus bringing him nearer to the God-like nature, which has supreme mastery and will. We may suppose the angels had no independent wills of their own; their perfection in other ways reflected God's perfection but could not raise them to the dignity of vicegerency. The perfect vicegerent is he who has the power of initiative himself, but whose independent action always reflects perfectly the will of his Principal. The distinction is expressed by Shakespeare (Sonnet 94) in those fine lines: "They are the lords and owners of their faces, Others but stewards of their excellence." The angels in their one-sidedness saw only the mischief consequent on the misuse of the emotional nature by man; perhaps they also, being without emotions, did not understand the whole of God's nature, which gives and asks for love. In humility and true devotion to God, they remonstrate: we must not imagine the least tinge of jealousy, as they are without emotion. This mystery of love being above them, they are told that they do not know, and they acknowledge (in v. 32 below) not their fault (for there is no question of fault) but their imperfection of knowledge. At the same time, the matter is brought home to them when the actual capacities of man are shown to them (vv. 31, 33).

48. The literal words in Arabic throughout this passage are: "The names of things;" which commentators take to mean the inner nature and qualities of things, and things here would include feelings. The whole passage is charged with mystic meaning. The particular qualities or feelings which were outside the nature of angels were put by God into the nature of man. Man was thus able to love and understand love, and thus plan and initiate, as becomes the office of vicegerent. The angels acknowledged this. These things they could only know from the outside, but they had faith, or belief in the Unseen. And they knew that God saw all—what others see, what others do not see, what others may even wish to conceal. Man has many qualities which are latent or which he may wish to suppress or conceal, to his own detriment.

We have none, save what Thou
Hast taught us: in truth it is Thou
Who art perfect in knowledge and
wisdom."

إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ○

33. He said : " Oh Adam ! tell them
Their natures." When he had told
them,
God said : " Did I not tell you
That I know the secrets of heaven
And earth, and I know what ye
reveal
And what ye conceal ? "

٣٣- قَالَ يَادُمْ أَتَيْتُكُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا
أَبَاهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي
أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا
تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ○

34. Then We said to the angels :
" Bow down to Adam : " and they
bowed down :
Not so Iblis :⁴⁹ he refused and was
haughty :
He was of those who reject Faith.

٣٤- وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ
فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ
مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ○

35. We said : " Oh Adam ! dwell
thou
And thy wife in the Garden ;⁵⁰
And eat of the bountiful things
therein
As ye wish ; but approach not this
tree,
Or ye run into harm and
transgression." ⁵¹

٣٥- وَقُلْنَا يَا دُمْ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ
الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا
وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ
الظَّالِمِينَ ○

36. Then did Satan ⁵² make them slip
From the Garden, and get them
out

٣٦- فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا

49. The Arabic may also be translated : " They bowed down, except Iblis." In that case Iblis (Satan) would be one of the angels. But the theory of fallen angels is not usually accepted in Muslim theology. In Q. xviii. 50 Iblis is spoken of as a jinn. We shall discuss later the meaning of this word.

50. Was the Garden of Eden a place on this earth ? Obviously not. For in verse 36 below, it was after the Fall, that the sentence was pronounced : " On earth will be your dwelling place." Before the Fall, we must suppose Man to be on another plane altogether—of felicity, innocence, trust, a spiritual existence, with the negation of enmity, want of faith, and all evil. Perhaps Time and Space also did not exist, and the Garden is allegorical as well as the tree. The forbidden tree was not the tree of knowledge, for man was given in that perfect state fuller knowledge than he has now (v. 31) : it was the tree of Evil, which he was forbidden not only to eat of, but even to approach.

51. "Zulm" in Arabic implies harm, wrong, injustice, or transgression, and may have reference to oneself ; when the wrong is done to others it implies tyranny and oppression ; the idea of wrong naturally connects itself with darkness, which is another shade of meaning carried with the root word.

52. "Iblis" in v. 34 is apparently the Power of Evil, with the root idea of desperateness or rebellion. "Satan" in this verse is the Power of Evil, with the root idea of perversity or enmity. Note the appropriateness of the term on each occasion. Also, "slipping" from the Garden denotes the idea of Evil gradually tempting man from a higher to a lower state.

Of the state (of felicity) in which
They had been. We said :
"Get ye down, all (ye people ⁵³),
With enmity between yourselves.
On earth will be your dwelling
place
And your means of livelihood ⁵⁴—
For a time."

وَمَا كُنَّا فِيهِ
وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُم لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ
وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَى
حِينٍ

37. Then learnt Adam from his Lord
Words of inspiration, ⁵⁵ and his
Lord
Turned towards him ; for He
Is Oft-returning, Most Merciful.

۞ فَتَلَكَّى أَدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ
عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

38. We said : "Get ye down all from
here ;
And if, as is sure, there come to you
Guidance from Me, ⁵⁶ whosoever
Follows My guidance, on them
Shall be no fear, nor shall they
grieve.

۞ قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا
فَأَمَّا يَاقِينَكَم فَبِئْسَ الْهَدَىٰ قَمَنُ تَبِعَ
هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ

39. "But those who reject Faith
And belie Our Signs,
They shall be Companions of the
Fire ;
They shall abide therein." ⁵⁷

۞ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ۝

C. 46.—Amongst men what nation had higher chances
(ii. 40-86.) In the realm of the Spirit than the Children of Israel ?
But again and again did they fail in the Spirit.

53. God's decree is the result of man's action. Note the transition in Arabic from the singular number in v. 33, to the dual in v. 35, and the plural here, which I have indicated in English by "All ye people." Evidently Adam is the type of all mankind, and the sexes go together in all spiritual matters.

54. Man's sojourn in this lower state, where he is partly an animal of this earth, is for a time. But he must fulfil his lower duties also, for they too are a part of his spiritual training.

55. As "names" in verse 31 above is used for the "nature of things," so "words" here mean "inspiration," "spiritual knowledge." The Arabic word used for "learn" here implies some effort on his part, to which God's Grace responded.

The Arabic word for "Repentance" (*tauba*) means "turning," and the intensive word (*tauwāb*) for God's forgiveness ("Oft-returning" or "Ever-returning") is from the same root. For repentance, three things are necessary: the sinner must acknowledge his wrong; he must give it up; and he must resolve to eschew it for the future. Man's nature is weak, and he may have to return again and again for mercy. So long as he does it sincerely, God is Oft-returning, Most Merciful. For His grace helps out the sinner's shortcomings.

56. Note the transition from the plural "We" at the beginning of the verse to the singular "Me" later in the same verse. God speaks of Himself usually in the first person plural "We": it is the plural of respect and honour, and is used in human language in Royal proclamations and decrees. But where a special personal relationship is expressed, the singular, "I" or "Me" is used. Cf Q. xxvi. 52, etc.

In spite of Man's fall, and in consequence of it, assurance of guidance is given. In case man follows the guidance, he is free from any fear for the present or the future, and any grief or sorrow for the past. The soul thus freed grows nearer to God.

57. But if the soul, in spite of the Oft-returning Mercy of God, rejects the higher light and goes on sinning against that light, the inevitable consequence must be the spiritual Fire. It is not merely a fortuitous incident. As his rejection was deliberate and definite, so the consequences must be of an abiding character.

They rebelled against Moses and murmured
In the wilderness; the Prophets they slew
And the Signs they rejected; they falsified
Scripture and turned their backs on righteousness.

SECTION 5.

40. ④h Children of Israel! call to
mind
The (special) favour which I
bestowed
Upon you, and fulfil your
Covenant ⁵⁸
With Me as I fulfil My Covenant
With you, and fear none but Me.

٣٠- يٰٓاَيُّهَا اِسْرَآءِيْلُ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي
اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِيْٓ اَوْفِ
بِعَهْدِكُمْ
وَإِيَّائِي فَارْهَبُوْنِ

41. And believe in what I reveal, ⁵⁹
Confirming the revelation
Which is with you,
And be not the first to reject
Faith therein, nor sell My Signs
For a small price; and fear Me,
And Me alone.

٣١- وَاٰمِنُوْا بِمَا اَنْزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ
وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا اَوَّلَ كٰفِرِيْهِمْ وَلَا تَشْرَوْا
بِآيٰتِيْ فِتْنًا قَلِيْلًا
وَإِيَّائِي فَاتَّقُوْنِ

42. And cover not Truth
With falsehood, nor conceal
The Truth when ye know (what it
is).

٣٢- وَلَا تَكْسِبُوْا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكُنْتُمْ
الْحَقَّ وَاَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ

43. And be steadfast in prayer;
Practise regular charity;
And bow down your heads ⁶⁰
With those who bow down (in
worship).

٣٣- وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاَتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَارْكَعُوْا
مَعَ الرّٰكِعِيْنَ

44. Do ye enjoin right conduct
On the people, and forget
(To practise it) yourselves,
And yet ye study the Scripture?
Will ye not understand?

٣٤- اَتَاْمُرُوْنَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ
اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَاَنْتُمْ تَتْلُوْنَ الْكِتٰبَ
اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ

58. The appeal is made to Israel subjectively in terms of their own tradition. You claim to be a favoured nation: have you forgotten My favours? You claim a special Covenant with Me: I have fulfilled My part of the Covenant by bringing you out of the land of bondage and giving you Canaan, the land "flowing with milk and honey;" how have you fulfilled your part of the Covenant? Do you fear for your national existence? If you fear Me, nothing else will matter.

59. You received revelations before: now comes one confirming it: its first appeal should be to you: are you to be the first to reject it? And reject it for what? God's Signs are worth more than all your paltry considerations. And the standard of duty and righteousness is to be taken from God, and not from priests and customs.

60. The argument is still primarily addressed to the Jews, but is of universal application, as in all the teachings of the Qurān. The chief feature of Jewish worship was and is the bowing of the head

45. Nay, seek (God's) help
With patient perseverance⁶¹
And prayer:
It is indeed hard, except
To those who bring a lowly
spirit,—

۴۵- وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا
لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ۝

46. Who bear in mind the certainty
That they are to meet their Lord,
And that they are to return to him.

۴۶- الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلْقُوا رَبَّهُمْ وَ
أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ۝

SECTION 6.

47. O Children of Israel! call to
mind
The (special) favour which I
bestowed
Upon you,⁶² and that I preferred
you
To all others (for My Message).

۴۷- يَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي
أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى
الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

48. Then guard yourselves against a
day
When one soul shall not avail
another,
Nor shall intercession be accepted
for her,
Nor shall compensation be taken
from her,
Nor shall any one be helped (from
outside).⁶³

۴۸- وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ
نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا
وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ
وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ
وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ۝

49. remember We delivered
you
From the people of Pharaoh: they
set you
Hard tasks and punishments,
slaughtered

۴۹- وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكَ مِنَ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُوءُونَكَ
سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَذْبَحُونَ آيَاتَكُمْ وَ
يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ بِسَاءِ كُفْرِهِمْ

61. The Arabic word *ṣabr* implies many shades of meaning, which it is impossible to comprehend in one English word. It implies (1) patience in the sense of being thorough, not hasty; (2) patient perseverance, constancy, steadfastness, firmness of purpose; (3) systematic as opposed to spasmodic or chance action; (4) a cheerful attitude of resignation and understanding in sorrow, defeat, or suffering, as opposed to murmuring or rebellion, but saved from mere passivity or listlessness, by the element of constancy or steadfastness.

62. These words are recapitulated from v. 40, which introduced a general account of God's favours to Israel; now we are introduced to a particular account of incidents in Israel's history. Each incident is introduced by the Arabic word "*Id*", which is indicated in the translation by "Remember".

63. Before passing to particular incidents, the conclusion is stated. Be on your guard: do not think that special favours exempt you from the personal responsibility of each soul.

Your sons and let your women-folk
live; ⁶⁴
Therein was a tremendous trial
from your Lord..

وَفِي ذَٰلِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
عَظِيمٌ

50. And remember We divided
The Sea for you and saved you
And drowned Pharaoh's people
Within your very sight. ⁶⁵

٥٠- وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمُ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَ
أَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

51. And remember We appointed
Forty nights for Moses, ⁶⁶
And in his absence ye took
The calf (for worship),
And ye did wrong.

٥١- وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ
اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِ
وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

52. Even then We did forgive you; ⁶⁷
There was a chance for you
To be grateful.

٥٢- ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِّن بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَشْكُرُونَ

53. And remember We gave
Moses the Scripture and the
Criterion ⁶⁸

٥٣- وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ

64. The bondage of Egypt was indeed a tremendous trial. Even the Egyptians' wish to spare the lives of Israel's females when the males were slaughtered, added to the bitterness of Israel. Their hatred was cruel, but their "love" was still more cruel. About the hard tasks, see Exod. i, 14: "They made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour." Pharaoh's taskmasters gave no straw, yet ordered the Israelites to make bricks without straw: Exod. v, 5-19. Pharaoh's decree was: "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive": Exod. i, 22. It was in consequence of this decree that Moses was hidden three months after he was born, and when he could be hidden no longer, he was put into an ark of bulrushes and cast into the Nile, where he was found by Pharaoh's daughter, and adopted into the family: Exod. ii, 2-10. Cf. Q. xx, 37-40. Thus Moses was brought up by the enemies of his people. He was chosen by God to deliver his people, and God's wisdom made the learning and experience and even cruelties of the Egyptian enemies themselves to contribute to the salvation of his people.

65. When the Israelites at last escaped from Egypt, they were pursued by Pharaoh and his host. By a miracle the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, but the host of Pharaoh was drowned: Exod. xiv, 5-31.

66. This was after the Ten Commandments and the Laws and Ordinances had been given on Mount Sinai: Moses was asked up into the Mount, and he was there forty days and forty nights: Exod. xxiv, 18. But the people got impatient of the delay, made a calf of melted gold, and offered worship and sacrifice to it: Exod. xxxii, 1-8.

67. Moses prayed for his people and God forgave them. This is the language of the Qurān. The Old Testament version is rougher: "The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people": Exod. xxxii, 14. The Muslim position has always been that the Jewish (and Christian) scriptures as they stand cannot be traced direct to Moses or Jesus, but are later compilations. Modern scholarship and Higher Criticism has left no doubt on the subject. But the stories in these traditional books may be used in an appeal to those who use them: only they should be spiritualized, as they are here, and especially in v. 54 below.

ssion of God's Will, is the true standard of right and wrong. It
lies in history. All these may be called His Signs or Miracles

(Between right and wrong) : there
was
A chance for you to be guided
aright.

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ○

54. And remember Moses said
To his people : " Oh my people !
Ye have indeed wronged
Yourselves by your worship of the
calf :
So turn (in repentance) to your
Maker,
And slay yourselves (the wrong-
doers) ; ⁶⁹
That will be better for you
In the sight of your Maker."
Then He turned towards you (in
forgiveness) :
For He is Oft-returning, Most
Merciful.

۵۴- وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يُقَوْمُوا زَانِمًا
ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِتِّخَاذُكُمْ الْعِجْلَ قَتُولًا
إِلَىٰ بَارِيكُمْ فَانْقَلِبُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ
ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِيكُمْ
فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ
إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْتَوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ○

55. And remember ye said : ⁷⁰ " Oh
Moses !
We shall never believe in thee
Until we see God in public,"
But ye were dazed
With thunder and lightning
Even as ye looked on.

۵۵- وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ بِكَ
حَتَّىٰ نَرَىٰ اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذْنَا لَكُمْ الضُّعْفَةَ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ○

56. Then We raised you up
After your death :
Ye had the chance
To be grateful.

۵۶- ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَشْكُرُونَ ○

57. And We gave you the shade of
clouds

۵۷- وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ

69. Moses's speech may be construed literally, as translated, in which case it reproduces Exod. xxxii. 27-28 but in a much softened form, for the Old Testament says : "Go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour . . . and there fell of the people that day 3,000 men. A more spiritualized version would be that the order for slaying was given by way of trial, but was withdrawn, for God turned to them in forgiveness. A still more spiritualized way of construing it would be to take "anfusakum" as meaning "souls," not "selves". Then the sense of Moses's speech (abbreviated) would be : "By the worship of the calf you have wronged your own souls ; repent : mortify (=slay) your souls now ; it will be better in the sight of God."

The word here translated Maker [Bārī] has also in it a touch of the root-meaning of "liberator,"—an apt word as referring to the Israelites, who had just been liberated from bondage in Egypt.

70. We have hitherto had instances from the Jewish traditional *Taurāt* (or Pentateuch). Now we have some instances from Jewish traditions in the Talmud, or body of exposition in the Jewish theological schools. They are based on the Jewish scriptures, but add many marvellous details and homilies. As to seeing God, we have in Exod. xxxiii. 20 : "And He said, 'Thou canst not see my face : for there shall no man see me and live.'" The punishment for insisting on seeing God was therefore death : but those who rejected faith were forgiven, and yet they were ungrateful.

And sent down to you
Manna⁷¹ and quails, saying:
"Eat of the good things
We have provided for you:"
(But they rebelled);
To Us they did no harm,
But they harmed their own souls.

السَّمَاءِ وَالتَّلَوَى
كُلُّوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ
وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

58. And remember We said:
"Enter this town,⁷² and eat
Of the plenty therein
As ye wish; but enter
The gate with humility,
In posture and in words,
And We shall forgive you your
faults
And increase the portion of
Those who do good."

٥٨- وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ
فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَادْخُلُوا
الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ
خَطِيئَتَكُمْ
وَسَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

59. But the transgressors
Changed the word from that
Which had been given them;
So We sent on the transgressors
A plague from heaven,
For that they did evil repeatedly.

٥٩- وَفَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي
قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ

SECTION 7.

60. And remember Moses prayed
For water for his people;
We said: "Strike the rock
With thy staff." There gushed
forth

٦٠- وَإِذِ اسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا
اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ

71. Manna=Hebrew, *Man-hu*? Arabic *Mā-huwa*?=What is it? In Exod. xvi. 14 it is described as "a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." It usually rotted if left over till next day; it melted in the hot sun; the amount necessary for each man was about an Omer, a Hebrew measure of capacity equal to about 2½ quarts. This is the Hebrew account, probably distorted by traditional exaggeration. The actual Manna found to this day in the Sinai region is a gummy saccharine secretion found on a species of Tamarisk. It is produced by the puncture of a species of insect like the cochineal, just as lac is produced by the puncture of the lac insect on certain trees in India. As to quails, large flights of them are driven by winds in the Eastern Mediterranean in certain seasons of the year, as was witnessed during the Great War of 1914-18 by many Indian officers who campaigned between Egypt and Palestine.

72. This probably refers to Shittim. It was the "town of acacias", just east of the Jordan, where the Israelites were guilty of debauchery and the worship of and sacrifices to false gods (Num xxv. 1-2 also 8-9); a terrible punishment ensued, including the plague, of which 24,000 died. The word which the transgressors changed may have been a pass-word. In the Arabic text it is "*Hijjatun*" which implies humility and a prayer of forgiveness, a fitting emblem to distinguish them from their enemies. From this particular incident a more general lesson may be drawn: in the hour of triumph we are to behave humbly as in God's sight, and our conduct should be exemplary according to God's word; otherwise our arrogance will draw its own punishment.

These verses, 58-59, may be compared with Q. vii. 161-62. There are two verbal differences. Here (v. 58) we have "enter the town" and in vii. 161 we have "dwell in this town". Again in v. 59 here we have "did evil" and in vii. 162, we have "transgressed". The verbal differences make no difference to the sense.

Therefrom twelve springs.
Each tribe ⁷³ knew its own place
For water. So eat and drink
Of the sustenance provided by God,
And do no evil nor mischief
On the (face of the) earth.

اَلْنَّتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ اُنَاسٍ
مَّشْرِبَهُمْ كُلُّوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللّٰهِ وَ
لَا تَقْتُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ۝

61. And remember ye said :
" Oh Moses ! we cannot endure
One kind of food (always) ;
So beseech thy Lord for us
To produce for us of what the
earth
Groweth,—its pot-herbs, and
cucumbers,
Its garlic, lentils, and onions."
He said : " Will ye exchange
The better for the worse ?
Go ye down to any town, ⁷⁴
And ye shall find what ye want ! "

۝۱- وَاِذْ قُلْتُمْ يٰمُوسٰى لَنْ نَّصْبِرَ عَلٰى
طَعَامٍ وَّاحِدٍ فَاَدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا
مِمَّا تُنْبِئُ الْاَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّائِهَا
وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسَها وَصَلْبِهَا قَالَ اَتَتَّبِعُ لَكَ
الَّذِى هُوَ اَدْنٰى بِالَّذِى هُوَ خَيْرٌ
اِهْبِطُوْا مِصْرًا فَلَنْ اَكْفُرَ مَا سَأَلْتُمْ

73. Here we have a reference to the tribal organization of the Jews, which played a great part in their forty years' march through the Arabian desert (Num. i and ii) and their subsequent settlement in the land of Canaan (Joshua, xiii and xiv). The twelve tribes were derived from the sons of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (soldier of God) after he had wrestled, says Jewish tradition, with God (Genesis xxxii. 28). Israel had twelve sons (Gen. xxxv. 22-26), including Levi and Joseph. The descendants of these twelve sons were the "Children of Israel". Levi's family got the priesthood and the care of the Tabernacle; they were exempted from military duties, for which the census was taken (Num. i. 47-53), and therefore from the distribution of land in Canaan (Josh. xiv. 3); they were distributed among all the Tribes, and were really a privileged caste and not numbered among the Tribes; Moses and Aaron belonged to the house of Levi. On the other hand Joseph, on account of the high position to which he rose in Egypt as the Pharaoh's minister was the progenitor of two tribes, one in the name of each of his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. Thus there were twelve Tribes in all, as Levi was cut out and Joseph represented two tribes. Their having fixed stations and watering places in camp and fixed territorial areas later in the Promised Land prevented confusion and mutual jealousies and is pointed to as an evidence of the Providence of God acting through His prophet Moses. Cf. also Q. vii. 160.

The gushing of twelve springs from a rock evidently refers to a local tradition well-known to Jews and Arabs in Muṣṭafā's time. Near Horeb close to Mount Sinai, where the law was given to Moses, is a huge mass of red granite, twelve feet high and about fifty feet in circumference, wherr European travellers (e.g., Breydenbach in the 15th Century after Christ) saw abundant springs of water twelve in number (see Sale's notes on this passage). It existed in Muṣṭafā's time and may still exist to the present day, for anything we know to the contrary. The Jewish tradition would be based on Exod. xvii. 6 : "Thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink."

The story is used as a parable, as is clear from the latter part of the verse. In the desolation and among the rocks of this life people grumble. But they will not be left starving or thirsty of spiritual life. God's Messenger can provide abundant spiritual sustenance even from such unpromising things as the hard rocks of life. And all the nations can be grouped round it, each different, yet each in perfect order and discipline. We are to use with gratitude all spiritual food and drink provided by God, and He sometimes provides from unexpected places. We must restrain ourselves from mischief, pride, and every kind of evil, for our higher life is based on our probation on this very earth.

74. The declension of the word *Misr* in the Arabic text here shows that it is treated as a common noun, meaning any town, but this is not conclusive, and the reference may be to the Egypt of Pharaoh. The *Tamwīn* expressing indefiniteness may mean "any Egypt", i.e., any country as fertile as Egypt. There is here a subtle reminiscence as well as a severe reproach. The rebellious children of Israel murmured at the sameness of food they got in the desert. They were evidently hankering after the delicacies of the Egypt which they had left, although they should have known that the only thing certain for them in Egypt was their bondage and harsh treatment. Moses's reproach to them was two-fold : (1) Such variety of foods you can get in any town; would you, for their sake, sell your freedom ? Is not freedom better than delicate food ? (2) In front is the rich Promised Land, which you are reluctant to march to; behind is Egypt, the land of bondage. Which is better ? Would you exchange the better for the worse ?

They were covered with humiliation⁷⁵

And misery; they drew
On themselves the wrath of God.
This because they went on
Rejecting the Signs of God
And slaying His Messengers
Without just cause.
This because they rebelled
And went on transgressing.

وَضَرَبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الدِّيلَةَ وَالْمَسْكَنَةَ
وَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَيَقْتُلُونَ الرِّسَالَ بَغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ
ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ٥

SECTION 8.

62. Those who believe (in the Qurān),
And those who follow the Jewish (scriptures),
And the Christians and the Sabians,⁷⁶—
Any who believe in God
And the Last Day,
And work righteousness,
Shall have their reward

٦٢- إِنْ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا
وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ
مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا
فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ٦

75. From here the argument becomes more general. They got the Promised Land. But they continued to rebel against God. And their humiliation and misery became a national disaster. They were carried in captivity to Assyria. They were restored under the Persians, but still remained under the Persian yoke, and they were under the yoke of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Arabs. They were scattered all over the earth, and have been a wandering people ever since, because they rejected faith, slew God's messengers, and went on transgressing.

The slaying of the Prophets begins with the murder of Abel, who was in the ancestry of Israel. The elder sons of Jacob attempted the murder of Joseph when they dropped him into the well, and if he was afterwards rescued by strangers, their blood-guilt was none the less. In later history they slew Jesus inasmuch as they got the Roman Governor to crucify one in his likeness, and they attempted to take the life of Muḥammad.

But the moral goes wider than the Children of Israel. It applies to all nations and all individuals. If they are stiff-necked, if they set a greater value on perishable goods than on freedom and eternal salvation, if they break the law of God and resist His grace, their portion must be humiliation and misery in the spiritual world and probably even on this earth if a long view is taken.

76. Latest researches have revealed a small remnant of a religious community numbering about 2,000 souls in Lower Iraq near Basra. In Arabic they are called *Ṣubḥī* (plural, *Ṣubbā*). They are also called Sabians and Nasoreans, or Mandæans, or Christians of St. John. They claim to be Gnostics, or knowers of the Great Life. They dress in white, and believe in frequent immersions in water. Their Book *Ginza* is in a dialect of Aramaic. They have theories of Darkness and Light as in Zoroastrianism. They use the name *Yardān* (Jordan) for any river. They live in peace and harmony among their Muslim neighbours. They resemble the Ṣābi-īn mentioned in the Qurān, but are not probably identical with them.

The pseudo-Sabians of Harrān, who attracted the attention of Khalifa Māmūn-al-Rashid in 830 A. D. by their long hair and peculiar dress probably adopted the name as it was mentioned in the Qurān, in order to claim the privileges of the People of the Book. They were Syrian Star-worshippers with Hellenistic tendencies, like the Jews contemporary with Jesus. It is doubtful whether they had any right to be called People of the Book in the technical sense of the term. But I think that in this matter (though many authorities would dissent) the term can be extended by analogy to cover earnest followers of Zoroaster, the Vedas, Buddha, Confucius and other Teachers of the Moral Law.

There was another people called the Sabæans, who played an important part in the history of early Arabia, and are known through their inscriptions in an alphabet allied to the Phœnician and the Babylonian. They had a flourishing kingdom in the Yemen tract in South Arabia about 800-700 B. C., though their origin may have been in North Arabia. They worshipped the planets and stars (Moon, Sun, Venus). Probably the Queen of Sheba is connected with them. They succumbed to Abyssinia about 350 A. D. and to Persia about 579 A. D. Their capital was near Sanāa. They had beautiful stone buildings, in which the pointed arch is noticeable. (See E. B. on Sabæans.)

With their Lord: on them
Shall be no fear, nor shall they
grieve.⁷⁷

63. And remember We took
Your Covenant
Under the towering height
Of Mount (Sinai) ⁷⁸:
(Saying): "Hold firmly
To what We have given you
And bring (ever) to remembrance
What is therein:
Perchance ye may fear God."

64. But ye turned back thereafter:
Had it not been for the Grace
And Mercy of God to you,
Ye had surely been
Among the lost.

65. And well ye knew
Those amongst you
Who transgressed
In the matter of the Sabbath:
We said to them:
"Be ye apes,
Despised and rejected."⁷⁹

66. So We made it an example
To their own time

وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ○

٦٣- وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ
الطُّورَ
خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ
وَادْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ○

٦٤- ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلَا
فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ
مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ○

٦٥- وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الذِّينَ اتَّعَدُوا مِثْقَا
فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ
لُتَوَلُّوا قِرَادَةً خَاسِرِينَ ○

٦٦- فَجَعَلْنَاهَا نَكَالًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا

77. Cf. Q. ii. 38, where the same phrase occurs.

The point of the verse is that Islam does not teach an exclusive doctrine, and is not meant exclusively for one people. The Jews claimed this for themselves, and the Christians in their origin were a sect of the Jews. Even the modern organized Christian churches, though they have been, consciously or unconsciously, influenced by the Time-spirit, including the historical fact of Islam, yet cling to the idea of Vicarious Atonement, which means that all who do not believe in it or who lived previously to the death of Christ are at a disadvantage spiritually before the Throne of God. The attitude of Islam is entirely different. Islam existed before the preaching of Muhammad on this earth: the Qurān expressly calls Abraham a Muslim (Q. iii. 67). Its teaching (submission to God's will) has been and will be the teaching of Religion for all time and for all peoples.

78. The Mountain of Sinai (*Tūr-u-Sinā*), a prominent mountain in the Arabian desert, in the peninsula between the two arms of the Red Sea. Here the Ten Commandments and the Law were given to Moses. Hence it is now called the Mountain of Moses (*Jabal Mūsā*). The Israelites encamped at the foot of it for nearly a year. The Covenant was taken from them under many portents (Exod. xix. 5, 8, 16, 18), which are described in Jewish tradition in great detail. Under thunder and lightning the mountain must indeed have appeared an awe-inspiring sight above to the Camp at its foot. And the people solemnly entered into the Covenant: all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

79. The punishment for breach of the Sabbath under the Mosaic law was death. "Every one that defileth it (the Sabbath) shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people": (Exod. xxxi. 14). There must have been a Jewish tradition about a whole fishing community in a seaside town, which persisted in breaking the Sabbath and were turned into apes: cf. Q. vii. 163-165. Or should we translate in both these passages, "Be as apes," instead of "Be apes"? This is the suggestion of Maulvi Muhammad 'Ali on this passage, on the authority of Mujāhid and Ibn Jarir Tabari. The punishment would be, not for the breach of the Sabbath in itself, but for their contumacious defiance of the Law.

And to their posterity,
And a lesson
To those who fear God.

67. And remember Moses said
To his people: " God commands
That ye sacrifice a heifer."⁸⁰
They said: " Makest thou
A laughing-stock of us ? "
He said: " God save me
From being an ignorant fool ! "

68. They said: " Beseech on our behalf
Thy Lord to make plain to us
What heifer it is ! "
He said: " He says: the heifer
Should be neither too old
Nor too young, but of middling
Age: now do what ye are
commanded ! "

69. They said: " Beseech on our behalf
Thy Lord to make plain to us
Her colour." He said: " He says:
A fawn-coloured heifer,
Pure and rich in tone,
The admiration of beholders ! "

70. They said: " Beseech on our behalf
Thy Lord to make plain to us
What she is: to us are all heifers
Alike: we wish indeed for guidance,
If God wills."

خَلَفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ○

٧٤- وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُذْبَحُوا بَقَرَةً قَالُوا أَتُؤَكِّلُونَا
هَذِهِ قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ
الْجَاهِلِينَ ○

٧٥- قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ
قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَا فَارِضٌ وَ
لَا يَكْرُ
عَوَاءٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ
فَاتَّعَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ ○

٧٦- قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا
قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاءٌ فَاقَةٌ
لَوْنُهَا شَبْرٌ خُضِرٌ ○

٧٧- قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ
إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشْبَهُ عَلَيْنَا
وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ○

80. This story or parable of the heifer in vv. 67-71 should be read with the parable of the dead man brought to life in vv. 72-73. The stories were accepted in Jewish traditions, which are themselves based on certain sacrificial directions in the Old Testament. The heifer story of Jewish tradition is based on Num. xix. 1-10, in which Moses and Aaron ordered the Israelites to sacrifice a red heifer without spot or blemish; her body was to be burnt and the ashes were to be kept for the purification of the congregation from sin. The parable of the dead man we shall refer to later.

The lesson of the heifer parable is plain. Moses announced the sacrifice to the Israelites, and they treated it as a jest. When Moses continued solemnly to ask for the sacrifice, they put him off on one pretext and another, asking a number of questions which they could have answered themselves if they had listened to Moses's directions. Their questions were carping criticisms rather than the result of a desire for information. It was a mere thin pretence that they were genuinely seeking for guidance. When at last they were driven into a corner, they made the sacrifice, but the will was wanting, which would have made the sacrifice efficacious for purification from sin. The real reason for their prevarications was their guilty conscience, as we see in the parable of the dead man (vv. 72-73).

. He said: " He says: a heifer
Not trained to till the soil
Or water the fields; sound
And without blemish." They said:
"Now hast thou brought
The truth." Then they sacrificed,
But not with good will."

٤١- قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَا ذَلُولَ تُثِيرُ
الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَا
شِيَةَ فِيهَا قَالُوا لَنْ نَجِدَ بِاِحْقَاقٍ فَنَذَرُهَا
وَمَا كَادُوا يَقْعَلُونَ

SECTION 9.

72. Remember ye slew a man⁸¹
And fell into a dispute
Among yourselves as to the crime:
But God was to bring forth
What ye did hide.

٤٢- وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادَرَأْتُمُ فِيهَا
وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ

73. So We said: "Place on the body
A piece of the heifer."
Thus God bringeth the dead
To life and showeth you His

Signs:

Perchance ye may understand.

٤٣- فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا
كَذَلِكَ يُخَيِّئُ اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى
وَلِيُرِيَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

74. Henceforth were your hearts
Hardened: they became
Like a rock and even worse
In hardness. For among rocks
There are some from which
Rivers gush forth; others
There are which when split
Asunder send forth water;
And others which sink

٤٤- ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
فَهُنَّ كَالْجِبَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنْ مِنْ
الْجِبَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنْ
مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشْقُقُ فَيُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنْ
مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ


81. In Deut. xxi 1-9 it is ordained that if the body of a slain man be found in a field and the slayer is not known, a heifer shall be beheaded, and the elders of the city next to the slain man's domicile shall wash their hands over the heifer and say that they neither did the deed nor saw it done, thus clearing themselves from the blood-guilt.

The Jewish story based on this was that in a certain case of this kind, every one tried to clear himself of guilt and lay the blame at the door of others. In the first place they tried to prevaricate and prevent a heifer being slain as in the last parable. When she was slain, God by a miracle disclosed the really guilty person. A portion of the sacrificed heifer was ordered to be placed on the corpse, which came to life and disclosed the whole story of the crime.

The lesson of this parable is that men may try to hide their crimes individually or collectively, but God will bring them to light in unexpected ways. Applying this further to Jewish national history, the argument is developed in the following verses that the Children of Israel played fast and loose with their own rites and traditions, but they could not thus evade the consequences of their own sin.

For fear of God: And God
Is not unmindful of your actions.⁸²

مَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ○

75.  an ye (Oh ye men of Faith)
Entertain the hope that they
Will believe in you?—
Seeing that a party of them
Heard the word of God,
And perverted it deliberately
After they understood it.

٤٥- اِنْ تَطْمَعُونَ اَنْ يُؤْمِنُوْا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ
فِرْقًا مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ
يَحْدِرُوْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوْهُ وَهُمْ
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ○

76. Behold! when they meet⁸³
The men of Faith, they say:
"We believe": but when
They meet each other in private,
They say: "Shall you tell them
What God hath revealed to you,
That they may engage you
In argument about it
Before your Lord?"—
Do ye not see their aim?

٤٦- وَاِذَا قَالُوا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا قَالُوْا اٰمَنَّا وَاِذَا
خَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ اِلَى بَعْضٍ قَالُوْا اَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّوْنُكُمْ
بِمَا فَتَمَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَاجَّوْكُمْ بِهِ عِنْدَ
رَبِّكُمْ ○
اَكَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ○

77. Know they not that God
Knoweth what they conceal
And what they reveal?

٤٧- اَوَلَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُرْسُوْنَ
: مَا تُعْلِنُوْنَ ○

82. The sinner's heart gets harder and harder. It is even harder than rocks, of which a beautiful poetical allegory is placed before us. In nature we think there is nothing harder than rocks. But there are rocks that weep voluntarily, like repentant hearts that come to God of their own accord: such are the rocks from which rivers and springs flow spontaneously, sometimes in small trickles, sometimes in big volumes. Then there are rocks which have to be split or dug into or blown up with dynamite, and underneath we find abundant waters, as in wells beneath rocky soil. Such are the hearts of a less degree of fineness, which yet melt into tears when some great blow or calamity calls the mind to higher things. And lastly, there are the rocks which slip or sink by geological pressure or in an earthquake, and send forth large spouts of water, as happened, for example, in the Bihar earthquake of 1931: such sinking or quaking may be poetically ascribed to fear. So there are hearts which will come to God by no higher motive than fear, but yet fear will melt them into tears of repentance. But the hardened sinner is worse than all these. His case is worse than that of rocks, for nothing will melt him.

83. The immediate argument applies to the Jews of Medina, but the more general argument applies to the people of Faith and the people without Faith, as we shall see below. If the Muslims of Medina ever entertained the hope that the Jews in their city would as a body welcome Muhammad Mustafa as the prophet prophesied in their own books, they were mistaken. In Deut. xviii, 18, they read: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee," (i. e., like unto Moses): which was interpreted by some of their doctors as referring to Muhammad, and they came into Islam. The Arabs are a kindred branch of the Semitic family, and are correctly described in relation to the Jews as "their brethren"; and there is no question that there was not another Prophet "like unto Moses" until Muhammad came; in fact the postscript of Deuteronomy, which was written many centuries after Moses, says: "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." But the Jews as a body were jealous of Muhammad, and played a double part. When the Muslim community began to grow stronger, they pretended to be of them, but really tried to keep back any knowledge of their own Scriptures from them, lest they should be beaten by their own arguments.

The more general interpretation holds good in all ages. Faith and Unfaith are pitted against each other. Faith has to struggle against power, position, organisation, and privilege. When it gains ground, Unfaith comes forward insincerely and claims fellowship. But in its own mind it is jealous of the armoury of science and knowledge which Faith brings into the service of God. But God knows all, and if the people of Faith will only seek knowledge sincerely wherever they can find it,—even as far afield as China as Muhammad said, they can defeat Unfaith on its own ground.

78. And there are among them ⁸⁴
 Illiterates, who know not the Book,
 But (see therein) their own fancies,
 And they do nothing but
 conjecture.

٨٠- وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ
 إِلَّا أَمْثَالَهُ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ○

79. Woe to those who write
 The Book with their own hands,
 And then say: "This is from God,"
 To traffic with it
 For a miserable price!—
 Woe to them for what is written
 With their hands, and for the gain
 They make thereby.

٨١- قَوْلِيلٍ لِّلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ
 ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ
 سُنَّتًا قَلِيلًا قَوْلِيلٍ لَهُمْ فَمَا كَتَبَتِ الْيَدُ
 وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ فَمَا يَكْسِبُونَ ○

80. And they say: "The Fire ⁸⁵
 Shall not touch us
 But for a few numbered days:"
 Say: "Have ye taken a promise
 From God, for He never
 Breaks His promise?
 Or is it that ye say of God
 What ye do not know?"

٨٠- وَقَالُوا لَنْ تَسْمَنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَةً
 قُلْ أَتَأْمَنُّكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَنْ تُخْلَفَ
 اللَّهُ عَهْدَهُ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا
 تَعْلَمُونَ ○

81. Nay, those who seek gain ⁸⁶
 In Evil, and are girt round
 By their sins,—
 They are Companions of the Fire:
 Therein shall they abide
 (For ever).

٨١- بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ
 خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ
 هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ○

82. But those who have faith
 And work righteousness,

٨٢- وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

84. The argument of v. 76 is continued. The Jews wanted to keep back knowledge, but what knowledge had they? Many of them, even if they could read, were no better than illiterates, for they knew not their own true Scriptures, but read into them what they wanted, or at best, their own conjectures. They palmed off their own writings for the Message of God: Perhaps it brought them profit for the time being: but it was a miserable profit if they "gained the whole world and lost their own souls" (Matt. xvi. 26). "Writing with their own hands" means inventing books themselves, which had no divine authority.

The general argument is similar. Unfaith erects its own false gods. It attributes things to causes which only exist in its own imagination. Sometimes it even indulges in actual dishonest traffic in the ignorance of the multitude. It may pay for a time, but the bubble always bursts.

85. The Jews in their arrogance might say: Whatever the terror of Hell may be for other people, our sins will be forgiven, because we are the children of Abraham: at worst, we shall suffer a short definite punishment and then be restored to the "bosom of Abraham." This bubble is pricked here. Read this verse with vv. 81-82.

The general application is also clear. If Unfaith claims some special prerogative, such as race, "civilisation," political power, historical experience, and so on, these will not avail in God's sight. His promise is sure, but His promise is for those who seek God in Faith, and show it in their conduct.

They are companions of the
Garden :
Therein shall they abide
(For ever).

أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ٥

SECTION 10.

83. **And remember We took** ⁸⁷
A Covenant from the Children
Of Israel (to this effect):
Worship none but God;
Treat with kindness
Your parents and kindred,
And orphans and those in need;
Speak fair to the people;
Be steadfast in prayer;
And practise regular charity.
Then did ye turn back,
Except a few among you,
And ye backslide (even now).

٨٣- وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ لَا
تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۖ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا
وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَ
قُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا ۚ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَ
آتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ
وَأَنتُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ٥

84. And remember We took ⁸⁸
Your Covenant (to this effect):
Shed no blood amongst you,
Nor turn out your own people
From your homes: and this
Ye solemnly ratified,
And to this ye can bear witness.

٨٤- وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ
دِمَاءَكُمْ وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنْ
دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ٥

85. After this it is ye, the same people,
Who slay among yourselves,
And banish a party of you
From their homes; assist
(Their enemies) against them,
In guilt and rancour;
And if they come to you
As captives, ye ransom ⁸⁹ them,

٨٥- ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَ
تُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقًا مِّنْكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ تَظَاهَرُونَ
عَلَيْهِمْ بِالْأَثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ وَإِنْ
يَأْتُواكُمْ أَسْرَىٰ نَفَدُوهُمْ ۚ

87. So far from the Covenant being of the kind you suggest in v. 80, the real Covenant is about the moral law, which is set out in v. 83. This moral law is universal, and if you break it, no privileges will lighten your punishment or help you in any way (v. 83). "Speak fair to the people" not only means outward courtesy from the leaders to the meanest among the people, but the protection of the people from being exploited, deceived, defrauded, or doped with things to lull their intelligence.

88. Verse 83 referred to the universal moral law. This verse 84 refers to its application under a special Covenant entered into with the Jews of Medina by the new-born Muslim Commonwealth under its Guide and Teacher Muhammad. This Covenant is given in Ibn Hishām's *Sīrat-ur-Rasūl*, and comments on it will be found in Ameer Ali's "Spirit of Islam" (London 1922), pp. 57-61. It was entered into in the second year of the Hijra, and was treacherously broken by the Jews almost immediately afterwards.

89. I understand "ransom them" here to mean "take ransom for them," though most of the Commentators take it to mean "give ransom for them." Muṣṭafā had made a Pact which, if it had been faithfully observed by all parties, would have brought a reign of law and order for Medina. But some of the treacherous Jews never intended to observe its terms. They fought and slew each other and not only banished those who were obnoxious to them but intrigued with their enemies. If by any chance they came back into their hands as captives, they demanded ransom for them to return to their homes although they had no right to banish them at all. If we understand by "ransom them," "pay ransom for them to release them from the hands of their enemies," it would mean that they did this pious act for show, although they were themselves the authors of their unlawful banishment. I think the former makes better sense.

Though it was not lawful
For you to banish them.
Then is it only a part of the Book
That ye believe in,
And do ye reject the rest ?
But what is the reward for those
Among you who behave like this
But disgrace in this life ? —
And on the Day of Judgment
They shall be reserved
For the most grievous penalty.
For God is not unmindful
Of what ye do.

وَهُوَ مُحْكَمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ
أَفْتَوْهُمْ نُونٌ بِمَعْصِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ
بِمَعْصِ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ
إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ
يُرَدُّونَ إِلَى أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ
وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

86. These are the people who buy
The life of this world at the price
Of the Hereafter: their penalty
Shall not be lightened,
Nor shall they be helped.

۸۶- أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
بِالْآخِرَةِ فَلَا يَخَفَتْ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ
وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

C. 47.—The people of Moses and the people of Jesus
(vv. 87-121.) Were given revelations, but alas!

They played false with their own lights,
And in their selfishness, made narrow
God's universal message. To them
It seemed incredible that His light
Should illumine Arabia and reform
The world. But His ways are wondrous,
And they are clear to those who have Faith.

SECTION 11.

87. ~~We~~ We gave Moses the Book
And followed him up
With a succession of Apostles;
We gave Jesus the son of Mary⁹⁰
Clear (Signs) and strengthened him
With the holy spirit. Is it
That whenever there comes to you
An Apostle with what ye
Yourselves desire not, ye are
Puffed up with pride?—
Some ye called impostors,
And others ye slay!⁹¹

۸۷- وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ
بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ
الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَآيَدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ
أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى
أَنْفُسُكُمْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ
فَتَقَرَّبْنَا كُنُوزَهُمْ وَفَرَّقْنَا نَفَقَاتُهُمْ

90. As to the birth of Jesus, cf. xix. 16-34. Why is he called the "Son of Mary"? What are his "clear signs"? What is the "holy spirit" by which he was strengthened? We reserve to a later stage a discussion of the Quranic teaching on these questions. See iii. 62, n. 401.

91. Notice the sudden transition from the past tense in "some ye called impostors" to the present tense in "others ye slay." There is a double significance. First, reviewing the long course of Jewish history, we have come to the time of Jesus: they have often given the lie to God's Apostles, and even now they are trying to slay Jesus. Secondly, extending the review of that history to the time of Muhammad, they are even now trying to take the life of that holy Apostle. This would be literally true at the time the words were promulgated to the people. And this transition leads on naturally to the next verse, which refers to the actual conditions before Muhammad in Medina in the second year of the Hijra.

Sections 11-13 (vv. 87-121) refer to the People of the Book generally, Jews and Christians. Even where Moses and the Law of Sinai are referred to, those traditions are common to both Jews and Christians. The argument is about the people who ought to have learnt from previous Revelations and welcomed Muhammad's teaching, and yet they both took up an attitude of arrogant rejection.

88. They say, "Our hearts
Are the wrappings⁹² (which
preserve
God's Word: we need no more)."
Nay, God's curse is on them
For their blasphemy:⁹³
Little is it they believe.

89. And when there comes to them
A Book⁹⁴ from God, confirming
What is with them, - although
From of old they had prayed
For victory against those
Without Faith, - when there
comes
To them that which they
(Should) have recognized,
They refuse to believe in it.
But the curse of God
Is on those without Faith.

90. Miserable is the price
For which they have sold
Their souls, in that they
Deny (the revelation)
Which God has sent down,
In insolent envy that God
Of His Grace should send it
To any of His servants He
pleases:⁹⁵

٨٨- وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ
بَلْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ
فَلَيْلًا مَا يُلْمُونَ

٨٩- وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ
مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ
وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَوَلَّيْنَا جَاءَهُمْ
مَّا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ
فَلَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

٩٠- بِسَمَاءٍ اشْتَرَوْا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ
أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ بَغْيًا
أَنْ يُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ
مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

92. The Jews in their arrogance claimed that all wisdom and all knowledge of God were enclosed in their hearts. But there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in their philosophy. Their claim was not only arrogance but blasphemy. In reality they were men without faith. (I take *Gulfan* here to be the plural of *Qilāfan*, the wrapping or cover of a book, in which the book is preserved.)

As usual, there is a much wider meaning. How many people at all times and among all nations close their hearts to any extension of knowledge or spiritual influence because of some little fragment which they have got and which they think is the whole of God's Truth? Such an attitude shows really want of faith and is a blasphemous limitation of God's unlimited spiritual gifts to His creatures.

93. The root *kafura* has many shades of meaning: (1) to deny God's goodness, to be ungrateful, (2) to reject Faith, deny His revelation, (3) to blaspheme, to ascribe some limitation or attribute to God which is derogatory to His nature. In a translation, one shade or another must be put forward according to the context, but all are implied.

94. The Jews, who pretended to be so superior to the people without Faith—the Gentiles—should have been the first to recognise the new Truth—or the Truth renewed - which it was Muhammad's mission to bring, because it was so similar in form and language to what they had already received. But they had more arrogance than faith. It is this want of faith that brings on the curse, i.e., deprives us (if we adopt such an attitude) of the blessings of God.

Again the lesson applies to a much wider circle than the Jews. We are all apt, in our perverseness, to reject an appeal from our brother even more summarily than one from an outsider. If we have a glimmering of the truth, we are apt to make ourselves impervious to further truth, and thus lose the benefit of God's Grace.

95. Racial arrogance made the Jews averse to the reception of Truth when it came through a servant of God, not of their own race. Again the lesson is wider. Is that averseness unknown in our own times, and among other races? Yet how can a race or a people set bounds to God's choice? God is the Creator and Cherisher of all races and all worlds.

Thus have they drawn
On themselves Wrath upon Wrath.
And humiliating is the punishment
Of those who reject Faith.

91. When it is said to them :
"Believe in what God
Hath sent down," they say :
"We believe in what was sent
down."

To us : " yet they reject
All besides, even if it be Truth
Confirming what is with them.
Say : " Why then have ye slain
The prophets of God in times
Gone by, if ye did indeed
Believe ? " 96

92. There came to you Moses
With clear (Signs) ; yet
Ye worshipped the Calf
(Even) after that, and ye
Did behave wrongfully.

93. And remember We took
Your Covenant
Under the towering height
Of Mount (Sinai) :
(Saying) : " Hold firmly
To what We have given you,
And hearken (to the Law) " : 97
They said : " We hear,
And we disobey " : 98
And they had to drink 99

فَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ عَلَى غَضَبٍ
وَالْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ○

٩١- وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا بِمَا أُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ
قَالُوا نؤمن بما أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا
وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ
مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ
قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللَّهِ
مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ○

٩٢- وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ
مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ○

٩٣- وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ
وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ
خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ
وَأَسْمِعُوا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا
وَأَشْرَيْنَا

96. Even the race argument is often a flimsy and hollow pretext. Did not the Jews reject Prophets of their own race who told them unpleasant truths? And do not other nations do likewise? The real trouble is selfishness, narrowness, a mean dislike of anything which runs counter to habits, customs, or inclinations.

97. Cf. the introductory words of Q. ii. 63, which are the same as the introductory words here, but the argument is developed in a different direction in the two places. In v. 63, after they are reminded of the solemn Covenant under the towering height of Mount Sinai they are told how they broke the Covenant in after ages. Here, after they are reminded of the same solemn Covenant, they are told that even then they never meant to observe it. Their thought is expressed in biting words of sarcasm. They said in words: "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do." But they said in their hearts: "We shall disobey."

98. What they should have said was: "We hear and we obey": this is the attitude of the true men of Faith (Q. ii. 285).

99. After the Commandments and the Law had been given at Mount Sinai, and the people had solemnly given their Covenant, Moses went up to the Mount, and in his absence, the people made the golden calf. When Moses returned, his anger waxed hot. "He took the Calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." (Exod. xxxii. 20.) This incident is interpreted in the Qur'an allegorically. The Calf is the symbol of disobedience, rebellion, want of faith. It was like a taint of poison. Their punishment was to swallow the taint or poison which they had themselves produced. They swallowed it not into their stomachs, but into their hearts, their very being. They had to mortify and humble themselves in the sight of God, as was shown in another allegory based on the Jewish narrative (see Q. ii. 54 and note, above).

Into their hearts
(Of the taint) of the Calf
Because of their Faithlessness.
Say : " Vile indeed
Are the behests of your Faith
If ye have any faith ! "

94. Say : " If the last Home,
With God, be for you specially,
And not for any one else,
Then seek ye for death,
If ye are sincere."

95. But they will never seek
For death, on account of the (sins)
Which their hands have sent
On before them.¹⁰⁰
And God is well acquainted
With the wrong-doers.

96. Thou shalt find them,
Of all people, most greedy
Of life,—even more
Than the idolaters :
Each one of them wishes
He could be given a life
Of a thousand years :
But the grant of such life
Will not save him
From (due) punishment.
For God sees well
All that they do.

SECTION 12.

97. Say : Whoever is an enemy¹⁰¹
To Gabriel—for he brings down

فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ
قُلْ بِسْمَايَا مُزَكَّمَةٍ إِيمَانُكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ ○

۹۴- قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ
فَتَمَسَّكُوا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ○

۹۵- وَلَنْ يَمُوتَهُ أَبَدًا
بِمَا قَدَّمْتِ أَيْدِيَهُمْ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ○

۹۶- وَلَنَجْذِثَهُمْ أَجْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاتِهِ
فِي ذَمِّ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا
يَوْمَ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعْتَرَفُ لَفَسَدَتِ
وَمَا هُوَ بِمُزَجَّزٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ أَنْ
يُعْتَرَفُ
وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ○

۹۷- قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ

100. The phrase "What their hands have sent on before them" frequently occurs in the Qur'an. Here, and in many places, it refers to sins. In such passages as lxxviii. 40, or lxxxi. 14, it is implied that both good and bad deeds go before us to the judgment-seat of God before we do ourselves. In ii. 110 it is the good that goes before us. Our deeds are personified. They are witnesses for or against us, and they always go before us. Their good or bad influence begins to operate before we even know it. This is more general than the New Testament idea in the First Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy, v. 24: "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some men they follow after."

101. A party of the Jews in the time of Muhammad ridiculed the Muslim belief that Gabriel brought down revelations to Muhammad Mustafa. Michael was called in their books "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people": (Daniel, xii. 1.) The vision of Gabriel inspired fear (Daniel, viii. 16-17). But this pretence—that Michael was their friend and Gabriel their enemy—was merely a manifestation of their unbelief, in angels, apostles, and God Himself; and such unbelief could not win the love of God. In any case it was disingenuous to say that they believed in one angel and not in another. Muhammad's inspiration was through visions of Gabriel. Muhammad had been helped to the highest spiritual light, and the message which he delivered and his spotless integrity and exemplary life were manifest Signs which every one could understand except those who were obstinate and perverse. Besides, the verses of the Qur'an were in themselves reasonable and clear.

Thus have they drawn
On themselves Wrath upon Wrath.
And humiliating is the punishment
Of those who reject Faith.

فَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ عَلَى غَضَبٍ
وَاللَّكْفِيرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ○

91. When it is said to them :

"Believe in what God
Hath sent down," they say :
"We believe in what was sent
down."

To us : "yet they reject
All besides, even if it be Truth
Confirming what is with them.
Say : "Why then have ye slain
The prophets of God in times
Gone by, if ye did indeed
Believe?"⁹⁶

٩١- وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ امْنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
قَالُوا نؤمنُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا
وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ
مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ
قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللَّهِ
مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ○

92. There came to you Moses
With clear (Signs) ; yet
Ye worshipped the Calf
(Even) after that, and ye
Did behave wrongfully.

٩٢- وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ
مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ○

93. And remember We took
Your Covenant
Under the towering height
Of Mount (Sinai) :
(Saying) : "Hold firmly
To what We have given you,
And hearken (to the Law) " :⁹⁷
They said : "We hear,
And we disobey" :⁹⁸
And they had to drink⁹⁹

٩٣- وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ
وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ
خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ
وَأَسْعُوا قَالُوا سَبِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا
وَأَشْرَيْنَا ○

96. Even the race argument is often a flimsy and hollow pretext. Did not the Jews reject Prophets of their own race who told them unpleasant truths? And do not other nations do likewise? The real trouble is selfishness, narrowness, a mean dislike of anything which runs counter to habits, customs, or inclinations.

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فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ
قُلْ بِسْمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ إِيْمَانُكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ ○

٩٤- قُلْ إِن كَانَتْ لَكُمْ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ
فَتَمَتَّعُوا الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ○

٩٥- وَلَٰكِن يَمَتُّوهُ أَبَدًا
بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ○

٩٦- وَلَيَجِدُنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاتِهِ
فِي ذَٰلِكَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا
يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ
وَمَا هُوَ بِمُخْرِجِهِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ أَنَّ
يُعَمَّرَ
وَاللَّهُ بِصِيرِهِ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ○

٩٧- قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ

100. The phrase "What their hands have sent on before them" frequently occurs in the Qur'an. Here, and in many places, it refers to sins. In such passages as lxxviii. 40, or lxxxii. 14, it is implied that both good and bad deeds go before us to the judgment-seat of God before we do ourselves. In ii. 110 it is the good that goes before us. Our deeds are personified. They are witnesses for or against us, and they always go before us. Their good or bad influence begins to operate before we even know it. This is more general than the New Testament idea in the First Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy, v. 24 : "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some men they follow after."

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The revelation to thy heart
By God's will, a confirmation
Of what went before,
And guidance and glad tidings
For those who believe,—

98. Whoever is an enemy to God
And His angels and apostles,—
To Gabriel and Michael,—
Lo! God is an enemy to those
Who reject Faith.

99. We have sent down to thee
Manifest Signs (*āyāt*);
And none reject them
But those who are perverse.

100. Is it not (the case) that
Every time they make a Covenant,
Some party among them
Throw it aside?—Nay,
Most of them are faithless.

101. And when there came to them
An Apostle from God,
Confirming what was with them,
A party of the People of the Book
Threw away the Book of God ¹⁰²
Behind their backs,
As if it had been something
They did not know!

102. They followed what the evil
ones ¹⁰³
Gave out falsely
Against the power
Of Solomon: the blasphemers
Were, not Solomon, but
The evil ones, teaching men

نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا
لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى
لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ○

٩٨- مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَجَنَّةِئِلَ وَمِيكَئِلَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ
لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ○

٩٩- وَلَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ
وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا إِلَّا الْفَاسِقُونَ ○

١٠٠- أَوْ كَلِمَاتٍ عَهْدًا وَعَهْدًا
بَيْنَهُ قَرِيبٌ مِّنْهُمْ

بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ○

١٠١- وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ

بَنَدَ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أَوْتُوا الْكِتَابَ كَتَبَ
اللَّهُ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ○

١٠٢- وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَى
مُلْكٍ سُلَيْمٍ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمٌ وَلَكِنَّ
الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ

102. I think that by "the Book of God" here is meant, not the Qurān, but the Book which the People of the Book had been given, viz., the previous Revelations. The argument is that Muḥammad's Message was similar to Revelations which they had already received, and if they had looked into their own Books honestly and sincerely, they would have found proofs in them to show that the new Message was true and from God. But they ignored their own Books or twisted or distorted them according to their own fancies. Worse, they followed something which was actually false and mischievous and inspired by the evil one. Such was the belief in magic and sorcery. These are described in the next verse in terms referring to the beliefs and practices of the "People of the Book."

103. This is a continuation of the argument in v. 101. The people of the Book, instead of sticking to the plain Books of Revelations, and seeking to do the will of God, ran after all sorts of occult knowledge, most of which was false and evil. Many wonderful tales of occult powers attributed the power of Solomon to magic. But Solomon dealt in no arts of evil. It was the powers of evil that pretended to force the laws of nature and the will of God; such a pretence is plainly blasphemy.

Magic, and such things
As came down at Babylon
To the angels Hārūt and

Marūt.¹⁰⁴

But neither of these taught
(Such things) without saying:
"We are only for trial;
So do not blaspheme."

They learned from them¹⁰⁵
The means to sow discord
Between man and wife.

But they could not thus

Harm any one except

By God's permission.

And they learned what harmed

them,

Not what profited them.

And they knew that the buyers

Of magic would have

No share in the happiness

Of the Hereafter. And vile

Was the price for which

They did sell their souls,

If they but knew!

وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ
وَمَارُوتَ^١

وَمَا يَعْلَمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ

حَتَّى يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ^٢

فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ

الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ^٣

وَمَا هُمْ بِضَآئِرِينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا يَذَنُ اللَّهُ

وَيَعْلَمُونَ مَا بَإِضْرَهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ^٤

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي

الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ^٥

وَلِيَشْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ^٦

لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ○

103. If they had kept their Faith
And guarded themselves from evil,

١٠٣- وَلَوْ أَكْتَمْتُمْ أَمْنًا وَاتَّقُوا لَشَوْبَةً

104. This verse has been interpreted variously. Who were Hārūt and Marūt? What did they teach? Why did they teach it? The view which commends itself to me is that of the *Tafsīr Haqqānī*, following Budhāwī and the *Tafsīr Kabīr*. The word "angels" as applied to Hārūt and Marūt is figurative. It means "good men, of knowledge, science (or wisdom), and power." In modern languages the word "angel" is applied to a good and beautiful woman. The earlier tradition made angels masculine, and applied to them the attributes which I have mentioned, along with the attribute of beauty, which was implied in goodness, knowledge, wisdom, and power.

Hārūt and Marūt lived in Babylon, a very ancient seat of science, especially the science of astronomy. The period may be supposed to be anywhere about the time when the ancient Eastern Monarchies were strong and enlightened: probably even earlier, as Mārūt tu or Marduk was a deified hero afterwards worshipped as a god of magic in Babylon. Being good men, Hārūt and Marūt of course dabbled in nothing evil, and their hands were certainly clean of fraud. But knowledge and the arts, if learned by evil men, can be applied to evil uses. The evil ones, besides their fraudulent magic, also learnt a little of this true science and applied it to evil uses. Hārūt and Marūt did not withhold knowledge, yet never taught any one without plainly warning them of the trial and temptation of knowledge in the hands of evil men. Being men of insight, they also saw the blasphemy that might rise to the lips of the evil ones puffed up with science and warned them against it. Knowledge is indeed a trial or temptation: if we are warned, we know its dangers; if God has endowed us with free will, we must be free to choose between the benefit and the danger.

Among the Jewish traditions in the Midrash (Jewish *Tafsīr*) was a story of two angels who asked God's permission to come down to earth but succumbed to temptation, and were hung up by their feet at Babylon for punishment. Such stories about sinning angels who were cast down to punishment were believed in by the early Christians also. (See the second Epistle of Peter, ii. 4, and Epistle of Jude, v. 6.) There may be an allusion to such legends here, but much spiritualised, and we are expressly warned against dabbling in magic or believing that anything can hurt us except by God's will, and God is just and righteous.

105. What the evil ones learnt from Hārūt and Marūt (see last note) they turned to evil. When mixed with fraud and deception, it appeared as charms and spells and love potions. They did nothing but cause discord between the sexes. But of course their power was limited to the extent to which God permitted the evil to work, for His Grace protected all who sought His guidance and repented and returned to Him. But apart from the harm that these false pretenders might do to others, the chief harm which they did was to their own souls. They sold themselves into slavery to the Evil One, as is shown in the allegory of Goethe's *Faust*. That allegory dealt with the individual soul. Here the tragedy is shown to occur not only to individuals but to whole groups of people, for example, the People of the Book. Indeed the story might be extended indefinitely.

How much better had been
The reward from their Lord,
If they but knew!

SECTION 13.

104. Oh ye of Faith!
Say not (to the Apostle)
Words of ambiguous import,¹⁰³
But words of respect;
And hearken (to him):
To those without Faith
Is a grievous punishment.

105. It is never the wish
Of those without Faith
Among the People of the Book,
Nor of the Pagans,
That anything good
Should come down to you
From your Lord.
But God will choose
For His special Mercy
Whom He will—
For His Grace is unbounded.

106. None of our revelations¹⁰⁷
Do we abrogate
Or cause to be forgotten,
But we substitute

مَنْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ
لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ٥

١٠٤- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا تَقُولُوا رَاعِنَا
وَقُولُوا انظُرْنَا وَاسْمَعُوا
وَاللَّكَفِيرِينَ عَذَابُ الْذِمَّةِ ٥
١٠٥- مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ
أَنْ يُنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ٥
١٠٦- مَا تَسْمَعُ مِنْ آيَةٍ
أَوْ نُسُخًا نَأْتِ

106. The word disapproved is *kā'inā*, which as used by the Muslims meant "Please look at us, attend to us." But it was ridiculed by enemies by a little twist to suggest some insulting meaning. So an unambiguous word "*Unzurnā*," with the same meaning is suggested. The general lesson is that we must guard ourselves against the cynical trick of using words which sound complimentary to the ear but have a hidden barb in them. Not only must we be plain and honest in our words. We must respectfully hearken to the words of a Teacher whom we have addressed. Thoughtless people use vain words or put foolish questions, and straightway turn their minds to something else.

107. The word which I have translated by the word "revelations" is *Āyāt*. See C. 41 n. It is not only used for verses of the Qurān, but in a general sense for God's revelations, as in Q. ii. 39 and for other Signs of God in history or nature, or miracles, as in ii. 61. It has even been used for human signs and tokens of wonder, as, for example, monuments or land-marks built by the ancient people of 'Ad (Q. xxvi. 128). What is the meaning here? If we take it in a general sense, it means that God's Message from age to age is always the same, but that its form may differ according to the needs and exigencies of the time. That form was different as given to Moses and then to Jesus and then to Muḥammad. Some commentators apply it also to the *Āyāt* of the Qurān. There is nothing derogatory in this if we believe in progressive revelation. In Q. iii. 7 we are told distinctly about the Qurān, that some of its verses are basic or fundamental, and others are allegorical, and it is mischievous to treat the allegorical verses and follow them (literally). On the other hand, it is absurd to treat such a verse as ii. 115 as if it were abrogated by ii. 144 about the Qibla. We turn to the Qibla, but we do not believe that God is only in one place. He is everywhere. See second note to ii. 144.

There may be express abrogation, or there may be "causing or permitting to forget." How many good and wise institutions gradually become obsolete by efflux of time? Then there is the gradual process of disuse or forgetting in evolution. This does not mean that eternal principles change. It is only a sign of God's infinite Power that His creation should take so many forms and shapes not only in the material world but in the world of man's thought and expression.

Something better or similar:
Knowest thou not that God
Hath power over all things ?

107. Knowest thou not
That to God belongeth
The dominion of the heavens
And the earth ?
And besides Him ye have
Neither patron or helper.

108. Would ye question
Your Apostle as Moses¹⁰⁸
Was questioned of old ?
But whoever changeth
From Faith to Unbelief,
Hath strayed without doubt
From the even way.¹⁰⁹

109. Quite a number of the people
Of the Book wish they could
Turn you (people) back
To infidelity after ye have
believed,
From selfish envy,
After the Truth hath become
Manifest unto them :
But forgive and overlook,¹¹⁰
Till God accomplish
His purpose ;¹¹¹ for God
Hath power over all things.¹¹²

يُخَيِّرُ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِفْهَامًا
أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ
١٠٧- أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ
ذَلِكُمْ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ۝

١٠٨- أَمْ تَرْيَدُونَ أَنْ نَسْأَلَ رَسُولَكُمْ
كَمَا سَأِلَ مُوسَى مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ
فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ۝

١٠٩- وَذَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفَّارًا
حَسَدًا مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ
فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهَ بِأَمْرٍ
۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝

108. Moses was constantly harassed with foolish, impertinent, or disingenuous questions by his own people. We must not follow that bad example. In spiritual matters, posers do no good : questions should be asked only for real instruction.

109. "Even way" : the Arabic word *sawā'a* signifies smoothness as opposed to roughness ; symmetry as opposed to want of plan ; equality or proportion as opposed to want of design ; rectitude as opposed to crookedness ; a mean as opposed to extremes ; and fitness for the object held in view as opposed to faultiness.

110. Three words are used in the Qur'ān, with a meaning akin to "forgive", but each with a different shade of meaning. *Aḥṣ* (here translated "forgive") means to forget, to obliterate from one's mind. *Ṣafaha* (here translated "overlook") means to turn away from, to ignore, to treat a matter as if it did not affect one. *Gafara* (which does not occur in this verse) means to cover up something, as God does to our sins with His Grace : this word is particularly appropriate in God's attribute of *Gaffar*, the One who forgives again and again.

111. The word *Amr* is comprehensive, and includes (1) an order or command as in Q. xcvi. 12 ; or (2) a purpose, design, will, as in Q. xviii. 82 ; or (3) affairs, working, doing, carrying out or execution of a design, as in Q. lxxxix. 5. In many cases some of these meanings run together.

112. Note how this phrase, seemingly repeated from ii. 106, and occurring in many other places, has an appropriate signification in each place. In v. 106 we were told about progressive revelation, how the same thing may take different forms, and seeming human infirmity contribute to the fulfilment of God's design, for God's power is unlimited. Here we are told to be patient and forgiving against envy and injustice : this too may be fulfilling God's purpose, for His power is infinite.

110. And be steadfast in prayer
And regular in charity:
And whatever good
Ye send forth for your souls ¹¹³
Before you, ye shall find it
With God: for God sees
Well all that ye do.

111. And they say: "None
Shall enter Paradise unless
He be a Jew or a Christian."
Those are their fancies.
Say: "Produce your proof
If ye are truthful."

112. Nay,—whoever submits
His whole self ¹¹⁴ to God
And is a doer of good,—
He will get his reward
With his Lord;
On such shall be no fear,
Nor shall they grieve. ¹¹⁵

SECTION 14.

113. The Jews say: "The Christians
Have naught (to stand) upon;"
And the Christians say:
"The Jews have naught
(To stand) upon." Yet they
Profess the (same) Book.
Like unto their word
Is what those say who know
not; ¹¹⁶

۱۱۰- وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ
وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ۝

۱۱۱- وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ
كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرِيًّا تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ
هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۝

۱۱۲- بَلَىٰ ۚ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ
وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ ۖ
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ۝

۱۱۳- وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصْرِيَّةُ عَلَى
شَيْءٍ ۖ وَقَالَتِ النَّصْرِيَّةُ لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُودُ
عَلَى شَيْءٍ ۖ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ
كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ

113. Cf. Q. ii. 95. n.

114. The word translated "self" is *Wajh*, a comprehensive Arabic word. It means (1) literally "face"; but it may imply (2) countenance or favour, as in xvi. 20; (3) honour, glory, Presence as applied to God, as in ii. 115, and perhaps also in lv. 27; (4) cause, sake ("for the sake of") as in lxxvi. 8; (5) the first part, the beginning, as in iii. 71; (6) nature, inner being, essence, self, as in v. 111, xxviii. 88, and perhaps also in lv. 27. Here I understand meaning 6: the face expresses the personality or the whole inner self of man.

115. This phrase comes in aptly in its own context many times. In this Sūra it occurs in xv. 38, 62, 112, 262, 274, and 277. It serves the same purpose as a refrain in a very well-arranged Song, or a *motif* in Wagner's powerful music.

116. It is a sure sign of ignorance and prejudice when you study the same book as another or a similar one and yet are absolutely intolerant of the meaning which the other draws from it. You should know better, but you speak like the ignorant. In this case the primary reference in the word "ignorant" may be to the Pagan Arabs.

But God will judge
Between them in their quarrel
On the Day of Judgment.

114. And who is more unjust
Than he who forbids¹¹⁷
That in places for the worship
Of God, God's name should be
Celebrated?—whose zeal
Is (in fact) to ruin them?
It was not fitting that such
Should themselves enter them
Except in fear. For them
There is nothing but disgrace
In this world, and in the world
To come, an exceeding torment.
115. To God belong the East
And the West: whithersoever
Ye turn, there is the Presence¹¹⁸
Of God. For God is
All-pervading,
All-knowing.
116. They say: "God hath begotten
A son": Glory be to Him.—Nay,
To Him belongs all
That is in the heavens
And on earth: everything
Renders worship to Him.¹¹⁹
117. To Him is due
The primal origin

قَالَهُ يَحْكُمُ بِهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا
فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ○

١١٤- وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ
أَنْ يُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَى فِي خَرَابِهِ
أُولَئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا
خَائِفِينَ هُ
لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا آخِزٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ○

١١٥- وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ هُ
فَإَيُّمَا لَوْ لَوْ فَتَمَّ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ○

١١٦- وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا هُ
سُبْحَنَةُ ذُنُوبِهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
كُلٌّ لَهُ فَالَتُونَ ○

١١٧- بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ هُ

117. There were actually Pagans in Mecca who tried to shut out the Muslim Arabs from the Ka'ba, the universal place of Arab worship. The Pagans themselves called it the House of God. With what face could they exclude the Muslims, who wanted to worship the true God instead of worshipping idols? If these Pagans had succeeded, they would only have caused violent divisions among the Arabs and destroyed the sanctity and the very existence of the Ka'ba.

This verse, taken in a general sense, establishes the principle of freedom of worship in a public mosque or place dedicated to the worship of God. This is recognised in Muslim law. There may be differences of opinion between one individual and another, or between one group and another as to the nature of God or the proper mode of worship, but no tests can be laid down, nor can one individual or sect exclude another. So long as a person enters reverently and does nothing outwardly to cause offence to the other worshippers, he has a right to go and worship in a public place set apart for God's worship.

118. The word translated "Presence" is *Wajh*, literally "face". See note to ii. 112 above.

119. It is a derogation from the glory of God—in fact it is blasphemy—to say that God begets sons, like a man or an animal. The Christian doctrine is here emphatically repudiated. If words have any meaning, it would mean an attribution to God of a material nature, and of the lower animal functions of sex. In a spiritual sense, we are all children of God. And all Creation celebrates His glory. Verse 117 should be read with this to complete the argument.

Of the heavens and the earth :¹²⁰
When He decreeth a matter,
He saith to it: "Be,"
And it is.

118. Say those without knowledge:

"Why speaketh not God
Unto us? Why cometh not
Unto us a Sign?"
So said the people before them
Words of similar import.
Their hearts are alike.
We have indeed made clear
The Signs unto any people
Who hold firmly
To Faith (in their hearts).

119. Thee have We sent

In truth as a bearer
Of glad tidings and a warner:
But of thee no question
Shall be asked of the Companions
Of the Blazing Fire.

120. Never will the Jews

Or the Christians be satisfied
With thee unless thou follow
Their form of religion. Say:

وَرَادَا أَتَيْنَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ
فَيَكُونُ ○

١١٨- وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا
يُكَلِّمُنَا اللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ
كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِثْلَ
قَوْلِهِمْ
تَشَابَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ
قَدْ بَيَّنَّا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ○

١١٩- إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا
وَنَذِيرًا
وَلَا تُسْأَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ ○

١٢٠- وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَى
حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَهُمْ مِثْلَهُمْ قُلْ

120. The previous verse told us that everything in heaven and earth celebrates the glory of God. Lest any one should think that the heavens and the earth were themselves primeval and eternal, we are now told that they themselves are creatures of God's will and design. Cf. Q. vi. 102, where the word *bada'a* is used as here for the creation of the heavens and the earth, and *khalaga* is used for the creation of all things. *Bada'a* goes back to the very primal beginning, as far as we can conceive it. The materialists might say that primeval matter was eternal: other things, i. e., the forms and shapes as we see them now, were called into being at some time or other, and will perish. When they perish, they dissolve into primeval matter again, which stands as the base of all existence. We go further back. We say that if we postulate such primeval matter, it owes its origin itself to God, Who is the final basis of existence, the Cause of all Causes. If this is conceded, we proceed to agree that the process of Creation is not then completed. "All things in the heavens and on the earth" are created by gradual processes. In "things" we include abstract as well as material things. We see the abstract things and ideas actually growing before us. But that also is God's creation, to which we can apply the word *khalaga*, for in it is involved the idea of measuring, fitting it into a scheme of other things. Cf. liv. 49; also xxv. 59. Here comes in what we know as the process of evolution. On the other hand, the "*amr*" (=Command, Direction, Design) is a single thing, unrelated to Time, "like the twinkling of an eye" (liv. 50). Another word to note in this connection is *ja'ala* "making," which seems to imply new shapes and forms, new dispositions, as the making of the Signs of the Zodiac in the heavens, or the setting out of the sun and moon for light, or the establishment of the succession of day and night (xxv. 61-62). A further process with regard to the soul is described in the word *sawwa*, bringing it to perfection (xci. 7), but this we shall discuss in its place. *Fajara* (xlii. 11) implies, like *bada'a*, the creating of a thing out of nothing and after no pre-existing similitude, but perhaps *fajara* implies the creation of primeval matter to which further processes have to be applied later, as when one prepares dough but leaves the leavening to be done after. *Badaa* (without the '*ain*'), xxx. 27, implies beginning the process of creation: this is made further clear in xxxi. 7, where the beginning of the creation of pristine man from clay refers to his physical body, leaving the further processes of reproduction and the breathing-in of the soul to be described in subsequent verses. Lastly, *baraa* is creation implying liberation from pre-existing matter or circumstance: e.g., man's body from clay (lix. 24) or a calamity from previously existing circumstances (lvii. 22.) See also ii. 54

"The Guidance of God,—that
Is the (only) Guidance."
Wert thou to follow their desires
After the knowledge
Which hath reached thee,
Then wouldst thou find
Neither Protector nor Helper
In God.

إِنَّ هُدَى اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ
وَلَكِنَّ أَتَّبَعْتَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي
جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ
مَالِكٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قُلُوبٍ وَلَا يُصِيرُ ۝

121. Those to whom We have sent
The Book study it
As it should be studied:
They believe therein:
Those who reject faith therein,—
The loss is their own.

۱۲۱-الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ
تِلَاوَتِهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ
يَكْفُرْ بِهِ ۚ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ۝

- C. 48.—If the People of the Book rely
(*vers.* 122-141.) Upon Abraham, let them study
His history. His posterity included
Both Israel and Ismā'il. Abraham
Was a righteous man of God,
A Muslim, and so were his children.
Abraham and Ismā'il built
The Ka'ba as the house of God,
And purified it, to be a centre
Of worship for all the world:
For God is the God of all Peoples.¹²¹

SECTION 15.

122. O Children of Israel! call to
mind
The special favour which I
bestowed
Upon you, and that I preferred you
To all others (for My Message).

۱۲۲-يَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي
أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَإِنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

123. Then guard yourselves against
a Day

۱۲۳-وَالْتَقُوا يَوْمًا

121. The argument now proceeds on another line. Ye People of the Book who go back to Abraham! not only is your claim to exclusive knowledge of God false and derogatory to the Lord of All the Worlds. If you must appeal to Abraham, he was also the progenitor of the Arab race through Ismā'il. Indeed Abraham and Ismā'il together built the House of God in Mecca (long before the Temple of Jerusalem was built). They purified it and laid the foundations of the universal religion, which is summed up in the word Islam, or complete submission to the Will of God. Abraham and Ismā'il were thus true Muslims. Whence then your rancour against Islam?

Historically the Temple at Mecca must have been a far more ancient place of worship than the Temple at Jerusalem. Arab tradition connects various places in and round Mecca with the name of Abraham and identifies the well of Zam-zam with the well in the story of the child Ismā'il. Arab tradition also refers the story of the Sacrifice to Ismā'il and not to Isaac, as does Jewish tradition in Gen. xxii. 1-19.

When one soul shall not avail
another,
Nor shall compensation be
accepted from her
Nor shall intercession profit her,
Nor shall any one be helped
(from outside).¹²²

لَا تُجْزَى نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا
وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ
وَلَا تَنْفَعُهَا شَفَاعَةٌ
وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ○

124. And remember that Abraham
Was tried by his Lord
With certain Commands,¹²³
Which he fulfilled:
He said: "I will make thee
An Imām¹²⁴ to the Nations."
He pleaded: "And also
(Imāms) from my offspring!"
He answered: "But My Promise
Is not within the reach
Of evil-doers."

١٢٣- وَإِذْ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ
بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَاتَمَمَهَا
قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ
لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا
قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي
قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ ○

125. Remember We made the House¹²⁵
A place of assembly for men
And a place of safety;
And take ye the Station
Of Abraham as a place
Of prayer; and We covenanted
With Abraham and Ismā'il,
That they should sanctify
My House for those who
Compass it round, or use it

١٢٥- وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ
وَأَمْنًا
وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى
وَعِهدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ
إِنَّ طَهَرَا بَيْتِي

122. Verses 122-123 repeat verses 47-48 (except for a slight verbal variation in v. 123, which does not affect the sense). The argument about the favours to Israel is thus beautifully rounded off, and we now proceed to the argument in favour of the Arabs as succeeding to the spiritual inheritance of Abraham.

123] *Kalimāt*; literally "words": here used in the mystic sense of God's Will or Decree or Purpose. This verse may be taken to be the sum of the verses following. In everything Abraham fulfilled God's wish: he purified God's house; he built the sacred refuge of the Ka'ba; he submitted his will to God's, and thus became the type of Islam. He was promised the leadership of the world; he pleaded for his progeny, and his prayer was granted, with the limitation that if his progeny was false to God, God's promise did not reach the people who proved themselves false.

124. *Imām*: the primary sense is that of being foremost: hence it may mean: (1) leader in religion; (2) leader in congregational prayer; (3) model, pattern, example; (4) a book of guidance and instruction (Q. xi. 17); (5) a book of evidence or record (Q. xxxiv. 12). Here, meanings 1 and 3 are implied. In Q. ix. 12 the word is applied to leaders of Unbelief or Blasphemy.

125. The Ka'ba, the House of God. Its foundation goes back by Arab tradition to Abraham. Its four-fold character is here referred to. (1) It was the centre to which all the Arab tribes resorted for trade, for poetic contests, and for worship. (2) It was sacred territory, and was respected by friend and foe alike. At certain seasons, all fighting was and is forbidden within its limits, and ever arms are not allowed to be carried, and no game or other thing is allowed to be killed. Like the Cities of Refuge under the Mosaic Dispensation, to which manslayers could flee (Num. xxxv. 6), or the Sanctuaries in Mediaeval Europe, to which criminals could not be pursued, Mecca was recognised by Arab custom as inviolable for the pursuit of revenge or violence. (3) It was a place of prayer: even to-day there is a Station of Abraham within the enclosure, where Abraham was supposed to have prayed. (4) It must be held pure and sacred for all purposes.

Though the verse as a whole is expressed in the First Person Plural, the House is called "My House," to emphasise the personal relation of the One True God to it, and repudiate the Polytheism which defiled it before it was purified again by Muḥammad,

As a retreat, or bend, or
Prostrate themselves therein ¹²⁶
(In prayer).

126. And remember Abraham said:
"My Lord, make this a City
Of Peace, ¹²⁷ and feed its People
With Fruits, ¹²⁸—such of them
As believe in God, and the Last
Day."

He said: "(Yea), and such as
Reject Faith,—for a while
Will I grant them their pleasure,
But will soon drive them
To the torment of Fire,—
An evil destination (indeed)!"

127. And remember Abraham
And Isma'il raised
The foundations of the House
With this prayer: "Our Lord!
Accept (this service) from us:
For Thou art the All-hearing,
The All-knowing.

128. "Our Lord! Make of us
Muslims, bowing to Thy (Will),
And of our progeny a people
Muslim, bowing to Thy (Will);
And show us our places
For the celebration of Thy rites;
And turn unto us (in Mercy);
For Thou art the Oft-returning,
Most Merciful.

129. "Our Lord! send amongst them
An Apostle of their own,
Who shall rehearse Thy Signs
To them and instruct them

لِلظَّالِمِينَ وَالْعَافِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ
السُّجُودِ ○

١٢٦- وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا
أَمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ
مَنْ أَمِنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُ قَلِيلًا
ثُمَّ أَصْطَرُّهُ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ النَّارِ
وَبَشِّرِ الصَّادِقِينَ ○

١٢٧- وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ
الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ
رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ○

١٢٨- رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ
وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ
وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ○

١٢٩- رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ
يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ

126. Four rites are here enumerated, which have now acquired a technical meaning. (1) Compassing the sacred territory, or going round: *Tawāf*. There are special guides who take pilgrim and visitors round. (2) Retiring to the place as a spiritual retreat, for contemplation and prayer: *I'tikāf*. (3) The posture of bending the back in prayer: *Rukū*. (4) The posture of prostrating oneself on the ground in prayer: *Sujūd*. The protection of the holy territory is for all, but special cleanliness and purity is required for the sake of the devotees who undertake these rites.

127. The root *salama* in the word Islam implies (among other ideas) the idea of Peace, and therefore when Mecca is the city of Islam, it is also the City of Peace. The same root occurs in the latter part of the name Jerusalem, the Jewish City of Peace. When the day of Jerusalem passed (see verse 134 or 141 below), Mecca became the "New Jerusalem"—or rather the old and original "City of Peace" restored and made universal.

128. The territory of Mecca is barren and rocky, compared with, say, *Thif*, a city 70-75 miles east of Mecca. A prayer for the prosperity of Mecca therefore includes a prayer for the good things of material life. This is the literal meaning. But note that the opposition in this verse is between the fruits of the Garden for the righteous and the torments of the Fire for the evil ones—a spiritual allegory of great force and aptness.

In Scripture and Wisdom,
And sanctify them :
For Thou art the Exalted,
The Wise." 129

SECTION 16.

130. And who turns away
From the religion of Abraham
But such as debase their souls
With folly ? Him We choose¹⁸⁰
And rendered pure in this world :
And he will be in the Hereafter
In the ranks of the Righteous.

131. Behold ! his Lord said
To him : " Bow (thy will to Me) : "
He said : " I bow (my will)
To the Lord and Cherisher
Of the Universe."

132. And this was the legacy
That Abram left to his sons,
And so did Jacob :
" Oh my sons ! God hath chosen
The Faith for you ; then die not
Except in the Faith of Islam."

133. Were ye witnesses¹⁸¹
When Death appeared before
Jacob ?
He said to his sons :
" What will ye worship after me ? "
They said : " We shall worship

وَعَلَّمَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

۱۳۰- وَمَنْ يَرْغَبُ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ

۱۳۱- إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ
أَسْلِمْ
قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

۱۳۲- وَوَضِيَ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بَيْنَهُ وَيَعْقُوبَ
يَبْنَويَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى لَكُمُ الدِّينَ
فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

۱۳۳- أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ
الْمَوْتَ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ
مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَ

129. How beautiful this prayer is, and how aptly it comes in here in the argument ! Such Paganism or star worship or planet-worship as there was in Abraham's time was first cleared out of Mecca by Abraham. This is the chief meaning of "sanctification" or purification in v. 125, although of course physical cleanliness is (in physical conditions) a necessary element of purification in the higher sense. Abraham and his elder son Isma'il then built the Ka'ba and established the rites and usages of the sacred city. He was thus the founder of the original Islam (which is as old as mankind) in Arabia. As becomes a devout man, he offers and dedicates the work to God in humble supplication, addressing Him as the All-hearing and the All-knowing. He then asks for a blessing on himself and his progeny generally, both the children of his eldest-born Isma'il and his younger son Isaac. With prophetic vision he foresees that there will be corruption and backsliding in both branches of his family : Mecca will house 360 idols, and Jerusalem will become a harlot city (Ezekiel xvi. 15), a city of abomination. But the light of Islam will shine, and reclaim the lost people in both branches and indeed in all the world. So he prays for God's mercy, addressing Him as the Oft-returning, Most Merciful. And finally he foresees in Mecca an Apostle teaching the people as one "of their own", and in their own beautiful Arabic language : he asks for a blessing on Muhammad's ministry, appealing to the Power and Wisdom of God.

130. *Istafā* : chose ; chose because of purity ; chose and purified. It is the same root from which *Muṣṭafā* is derived, one of the titles of Muhammad.

131. The whole of the Children of Israel are called to witness one of their slogans, that they worshipped "the God of their fathers". The idea in their minds got narrowed down to that of a tribal God. But they are reminded that their ancestors had the principle of Islam in them,—the worship of the One True and Universal God. The death-bed scene is described in Jewish tradition,

Thy God and the God of thy fathers,¹³²—
Of Abraham, Isma'il, and Isaac,—
The One (True) God:
To Him we bow (in Islām)."

134. That was a People that hath
Passed away. They shall reap
The fruit of what they did,
And ye of what ye do!
Of their merits
There is no question in your case!¹³³

135. They say: "Become Jews
Or Christians if ye would be guided
(To salvation)." Say thou:
"Nay! (I would rather) the
Religion
Of Abraham the True,¹³⁴
And he joined not gods with God."

136. Say ye: "We believe
In God, and the revelation
Given to us, and to Abraham,
Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob,
And the Tribes, and that given
To Moses and Jesus, and that given
To the other Apostles from their
Lord:
We make no difference
Between one and another of them:
For we bow to God (in Islām).¹³⁵

137. So if they believe
As ye believe, they are indeed
On the right path; but if
They turn back, it is they

إِلَهُ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ
إِلَهًُا وَاحِدًا ۖ

وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ۝

۱۳۴- تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ۖ لَهَا مَا
كَسَبَتْ وَ لَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ ۖ وَلَا تَسْأَلُونَهُ
عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝

۱۳۵- وَ قَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى
تَهْتَدُوا ۚ قُلْ

بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۖ

وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۝

۱۳۶- قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا
أُنْزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَ
يَعْقُوبَ وَ الْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَ
عِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ
بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَ نَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ۝

۱۳۷- فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِبِشْرِ مَا آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ
فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا ۖ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا

132. "Fathers" means ancestors, and includes uncles, grand-uncles, as well as direct ascendants.
133. I have made a free paraphrase of what would read literally: "Ye shall not be asked about what they used to do." On the Day of Judgment each soul would have to answer for its own deeds: it cannot claim merit from others, nor be answerable for the crimes or sins of others. Here the argument is: if the Jews or Christians claim the merits of Father Abraham and the Patriarchs or of Jesus, we cannot follow them. Because there were righteous men in the past, it cannot help us unless we are ourselves righteous. The doctrine of personal responsibility is a cardinal feature of Islām.

134. *Ḥanīf*: inclined to right opinion, orthodox (in the literal meaning of the Greek words), firm in faith, sound and well-balanced, true. Perhaps the last word, True, sums up most of the other shades.
The Jews, though taught Unity, went after false gods, and the Christians invented the Trinity or borrowed it from Paganism. We go back to the pure, *ḥanīf* doctrine of Abraham, to live and die in faith in the One True God.

135. Here we have the Creed of Islām: to believe in (1) the One Universal God, (2) the Message to us through Muḥammad and the Signs (āyāt) as interpreted on the basis of personal responsibility, (3) the Message delivered by other Teachers in the past. These are mentioned in three groups: (1) Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes: of these Abraham had apparently a book (2. i. xxvi, 19), and the others followed his tradition; (2) Moses and Jesus, who each left a scripture: these scriptures are still extant, though not in their pristine form; and (3) other scriptures, Apostles, or Messengers of God, not specifically mentioned in the Qurān (Q. xl. 78). We make no difference between any of these. Their Message (in essentials) was one, and that is the basis of Islām.

Who are in schism; but God will
Suffice thee as against them,¹³⁶
And He is the All-hearing,
The All-knowing.

هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ نَسِيكَفِيكَهُمْ اللَّهُ
وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

138. (Our religion is)
The Baptism of God:¹³⁷
And who can baptise better
Than God? And it is He
Whom we worship.

١٣٨- صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ
صِبْغَةً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عِبْدُونَ ○

139. Say: Will ye dispute
With us about God, seeing
That He is our Lord
And your Lord; that we
Are responsible for our doings
And ye for yours; and that
We are sincere (in our faith)
In Him?

١٣٩- قُلْ أَنْتَ حَاجُّونَنَا فِي اللَّهِ
وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ
وَلَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ ○

140. Or¹³⁸ do ye say that
Abraham, Ismā'il, Isaac,
Jacob and the Tribes were
Jews or Christians?
Say: Do ye know better
Than God? Ah! who
Is more unjust than those
Who conceal the testimony
They have from God?
But God is not unmindful
Of what ye do!

١٤٠- أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا يَهُودًا
أَوْ نَصَارَى قُلْ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللَّهُ
وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِنْدَهُ
مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ○

141. That was a people that hath
Passed away. They shall reap
The fruit of what they did,
And ye of what ye do!
1. Of their merits
30 There is no question in your case:¹³⁹

١٤١- تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ
لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ
وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ○

136. We are thus in the true line of those who follow the one and indivisible Message of the One God, wherever delivered. If others narrow it or corrupt it, it is they who have left the faith and created a division or schism. But God sees and knows all. And He will protect His own, and His support will be infinitely more precious than the support which men can give.

137. *Ṣibghat*: baptism: the root-meaning implies a dye or colour; apparently the Arab Christians mixed a dye or colour in the baptismal water, signifying that the baptised person got a new colour in life. We do not believe that it is necessary to be baptised to be saved. Our higher baptism is the "Baptism" of God, by which we take on a colour (symbolically) of God, and absorb His goodness in us.

The accusative case of *Ṣibghat* puts it in apposition to *millat* ("religion") in v. 135.

138. The alternative is with the question in the last verse. Do you dispute with us although we worship the same God as you and claim that ours is the same religion as that of your ancestors? Or do you really assert that Abraham and his sons and his son's sons, who founded the Tribes long before Moses, followed your Jewish religion as you know it? History of course proves that claim absurd. If the Christians claim that these Patriarchs knew of and followed the teachings of Jesus, the claim is still more absurd,—except in the sense of Islam that God's teaching is one in all ages.

139. Verse 134 began a certain argument, which is now rounded off in the same words in this verse. To use a musical term, the *motif* is now completed. The argument is that it is wrong to claim a monopoly for God's Message: it is the same for all peoples and in all ages, if it undergoes local variations or variations according to times and seasons, those variations pass away. This leads to the argument in the remainder of the *Sūra* that with the renewal of the Message and the birth of a new People, a new symbolism and new ordinances become appropriate, and they are now expounded,

C. 49.—But those people have passed away,
(u. 142-167.) Who promised to uphold the Law of God.

Their progeny having been found
Unworthy, their place was taken
By a new people looking towards Mecca,—
A new people, with a new Messenger,
To bear witness to God's Law,
To proclaim the truth, maintain
His Symbols, and strive and fight
For Unity in God's Way.

SECTION 17.

142. The Fools among the people¹⁴⁰
Will say: "What hath turned
Them from the Qibla¹⁴¹ to which
They were used?" Say:
To God belong both East and
West:
He guideth whom He will
To a Way that is straight.

143. Thus¹⁴² have We made of you
An *Ummat* justly balanced,¹⁴³
That ye might be witnesses¹⁴⁴
As between the nations,

سَيَقُولُ الشُّمَّاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ
مَا وَلَهُمْ عَن قِبَلِهِمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ
يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا
لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

140. *Nās*=People, the unthinking multitude that sway to and fro, instead of being firm in God's Way. The reference here is to the idolaters, the Hypocrites, and the party of Jews who were constantly seeking to "entangle in their talk" *Muṣṭafā* and his disciples in Medina even as the Pharisees and the Sadducees of Jesus's day tried to entangle Jesus (Matt. xxii, 15, 23).

141. *Qibla*=the direction to which Muslims turn in prayer. Islam lays great stress on social prayer in order to emphasise our universal Brotherhood and mutual co-operation. For such prayer, order, punctuality, precision, symbolical postures, and a common direction are essential, so that the Imam (leader) and all his congregation may face one way and offer their supplications to God. In the early days, before they were organised as a people, they followed as a symbol for their Qibla the sacred city of Jerusalem, sacred both to the Jews and the Christians, the people of the Book. This symbolised their allegiance to the continuity of God's revelation. When, despised and persecuted, they were turned out of Mecca and arrived in Medina, *Muṣṭafā* under divine direction began to organise his people as an *Ummat*, an independent people, with laws and rituals of their own. At that stage the Ka'ba was established as a Qibla, thus going back to the earliest centre, with which the name of Abraham was connected, and traditionally also the name of Adam. Jerusalem still remained (and remains) sacred in the eyes of Islam on account of its past, but Islam is a progressive religion, and its new symbolism enabled it to shake off the tradition of a dead past and usher in the era of untrammelled freedom dear to the spirit of Arabia. The change took place about 16½ months after Hiyrat.

142. Thus: By giving you a Qibla of your own, most ancient in history, and most modern as a symbol of your organisation as a new nation (*Ummat*).

143. Justly balanced: The essence of Islam is to avoid all extravagances on either side. It is a sober, practical religion. But the Arabic word (*wasat*) also implies a touch of the literal meaning of Intermediacy. Geographically Arabia is in an intermediate position in the Old World, as was proved in history by the rapid expansion of Islam, north, south, west and east.

144. Witnesses: When two persons dispute, they advance extravagant claims. A just witness comes between them, and brings the light of reason to bear on them, pruning all their selfish extravagances. So the mission of Islam is to curb, for instance, the extreme formalism of the Mosaic law and the extreme "other-worldliness" professed by Christianity. The witness must be unselfish, equipped with first-hand knowledge, and ready to intervene in the cause of justice. Such is the position claimed by Islam among rival systems. Similarly, within Islam itself, the position of witness to whom disputants can appeal is held by *Muḥammad Muṣṭafā*.

And the Apostle a witness
As between yourselves ;
And We appointed the Qibla
To which thou wast used,
To test those who followed
The Apostle from those
Who would turn on their heels ¹⁴⁵
(From the Faith). Indeed it was
(A change) momentous, except
To those guided by God.
And never would God
Make your faith of no effect. ¹⁴⁶
For God is to all people
Most surely full of kindness,
Most Merciful.

144. We see the turning
Of thy face (for guidance)
To the heavens: ¹⁴⁷ now
Shall We turn thee
To a Qibla that shall
Please thee. Turn then
Thy face in the direction
Of the sacred Mosque: ¹⁴⁸
Wherever ye are, turn
Your faces in that direction.

وَيَكُونُ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا
الْأَيْمَنَ لِمَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ
وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ عَقَبَيْهِ
وَلَئِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمُ دِينًا إِلَّا عَلَىٰ الدِّينِ هَدَىٰ
اللَّهُ
وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ أَيْمَانَكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ
۝۱۴۳
قَدْ نَرَىٰ تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ
فَلَنُؤَلِّيكَ بِقِبْلَتِكَ نَرْضَاهَا
قَوْلُ وَجْهِكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ
وَلِئِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ

145. The Qibla to Jerusalem might itself have seemed strange to the Arabs, and the change from it to the Ka'ba might have seemed strange after they had become used to the other. In reality one direction or another, or east or west, in itself did not matter, as God is in all places, and is independent of Time and Place. What mattered was the sense of discipline, on which Islam lays so much stress: which of us is willing to follow the directions of the chosen Apostle of God? Mere quibblers about non-essential matters are tested by this.

146. What became of prayer with the Jerusalem Qibla? It was equally efficacious before the new Qibla was ordained. God regards our faith: every act of true and genuine faith is efficacious with Him, even if formalists pick holes in such acts.

147. This shows the sincere desire of Muḥammad to seek light from above in the matter of the Qibla. Until the organisation of his own People into a well knit community, with its distinctive laws and ordinances, he followed a practice based on the fact that the Jews and Christians looked upon Jerusalem as a sacred city. But there was no universal Qibla among them. Some Jews turned towards Jerusalem, especially during the Captivity, as we shall see later. At the time of our Prophet, Jerusalem was in the hands of the Byzantine Empire, which was Christian. But the Christians oriented their churches to the East (hence the word "orientation"), which is a point of the compass, and not the direction of any sacred place. The fact of the altar being in the East does not mean that every worshipper has his face to the east; for, according at least to modern practice, the seats in a church are so placed that different worshippers may face in different directions. The Preacher of Unity naturally wanted, in this as in other matters, a symbol of complete unity, and his heart was naturally delighted when the Qibla towards the Ka'ba was settled. Its connection with Abraham gave it great antiquity: its character of being an Arab centre made it appropriate when the Message came in Arabic, and was preached through the union of the Arabs; at the time it was adopted, the little Muslim community was shut out of it, being exiles in Medina, but it became a symbol of hope and eventual triumph, of which Muḥammad lived to see the fulfilment; and it also became the centre and gathering ground of all peoples in the universal pilgrimage, which was instituted with it.

148. *The Sacred Mosque*: The Ka'ba in the sacred city of Mecca. It is not correct to suggest that the command making the Ka'ba the Qibla abrogates ii. 113, where it is stated that East and West belong to God, and He is everywhere. This is perfectly true at all times, before and after the institution of the Qibla. As if to emphasise this, the same words about East and West are repeated in this very passage; see ii. 142 above. Where the *Itqān* mentions *mansūkh* in this connection, I am sorry I cannot follow that opinion, unless *mansūkh* is defined in a special way, as some of the commentators do.

The people of the Book ¹⁴⁹
 Know well that that is
 The truth from their Lord.
 Nor is God unmindful
 Of what they do.

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
 وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ٥

145. Even if thou wert to bring
 To the people of the Book
 All the Signs (together),
 They would not follow
 Thy Qibla; nor art thou
 Going to follow their Qibla;
 Nor indeed will they follow ¹⁵⁰
 Each other's Qibla. If thou
 After the knowledge hath reached
 thee,
 Wert to follow their (vain)
 Desires,—then wert thou
 Indeed (clearly) in the wrong.

۱۴۵- وَلَئِنْ أَتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
 بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَتَّبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ
 وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ
 وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ
 وَلَئِنْ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ
 قَرُبَ بَعْدُ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ
 إِنَّكَ إِذَا لَسْتَ الظَّالِمِينَ ٥

146. The people of the Book
 Know this as they know
 Their own sons; ¹⁵¹ but some
 Of them conceal the truth
 Which they themselves know.

۱۴۶- الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعْتَهُمْ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا
 يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ
 لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ٥
 ۱۴۷- الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُنْتَرِينَ ٥

147. The Truth is from thy Lord; ¹⁵²
 So be not in doubt.

149. Glimmerings of such a Qibla were already foreshadowed in Jewish and Christian practice but its universality was only perfected in Islam.

150. See the first note to ii. 144 above.

The Jews and Christians had a glimmering of the Qibla idea, but in their attitude of self-sufficiency they were not likely to welcome the Qibla idea as perfected in Islam. Nor is Islam, after the fuller knowledge which it has received, likely to revert to the uncertain, imperfect, and varying ideas of orientation held previously.

A very clear glimpse of the old Jewish practice, in the matter of the Qibla and the importance attached to it is found in the book of Daniel, vi. 10. Daniel was a righteous man of princely lineage and lived about 606-538 B. C. He was carried off to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, the Assyrian, but was still living when Assyria was overthrown by the Medes and Persians. In spite of the "captivity" of the Jews, Daniel enjoyed the highest offices of state at Babylon, but he was ever true to Jerusalem. His enemies (under the Persian monarch) got a penal law passed against any one who "asked a petition of any god or man for 30 days" except the Persian King. But Daniel continued true to Jerusalem. "His windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

151. The People of the Book should have known all this as well as "they knew their own sons", as their past traditions and teaching should have made them receptive of the new Message. Some commentators construe the demonstrative pronoun "this" to refer to the Apostle. In that case the interpretation would be: The People of the Book know Muhammad as well as they know their own sons; they know him to be true and upright; they know him to be in the line of Abraham; they know him to correspond to the description of the prophet foretold among themselves; but selfishness induces some of them to act against their own knowledge and conceal the truth.

152. Truth only comes from God, and it remains truth, however men might try to conceal it or throw doubts on it.

SECTION 18.

148. **وَالْأَمْرُ** To each is a goal
 To which God¹⁵³ turns him;
 Then strive together (as in a race)
 Towards all that is good.
 Wheresoever ye are,
 God will bring you
 Together. For God
 Hath power over all things.

١٤٨- وَرَبِّ كُلِّ وَجْهَةٍ مُوْمِنِينَ فَاَسْتَوُوا
 الْحَدِيثُ
 اَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝

149. From whencesoever
 Thou startest forth,¹⁵⁴ turn
 Thy face in the direction
 Of the Sacred Mosque;
 That is indeed the truth
 From thy Lord. And God
 Is not unmindful
 Of what ye do.

١٤٩- وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ قَوْلٍ
 وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
 وَرَأَيْتَ لِلْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
 وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝

150. So from whencesoever
 Thou startest forth, turn
 Thy face in the direction
 Of the Sacred Mosque;
 And wheresoever ye are,
 Turn your face thither :
 That there be no ground
 Of dispute against you
 Among the people,
 Except those of them that are
 Bent on wickedness ; so fear
 Them not, but fear Me ;
 And that I may complete
 My favours on you, and ye
 May (consent to) be guided ;

١٥٠- وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ قَوْلٍ
 وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
 وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ
 فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ
 لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ
 إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ
 فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي
 وَلِأَتَمِّمَ فَضْلِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ۝

153. The question is how we are to construe the pronoun *huwa* in the original. The alternative translation would be : " To each is a goal to which he turns. "

The simile of life being a race in which we all zealously run forward to the one goal, viz., the goal of good, may be applied individually and nationally. This supplies another argument of the Ka'ba Qibla, viz., the unity of goal, with diversity of races, traditions and temperaments.

154. The simile of a race is continued, and so the Qibla command is repeated from that point of view. In v. 144 it was mentioned as the new symbol of the new nation (Muslim) ; now it is shown as the symbol of Good, at which we should all aim, from whichever point we started, e.g., as Jews or Christians, or our individual point of view ; the Qibla will unite us as a symbol of the Goal of the Future. In v. 150 below, it is repeated : first for the individual, on the ground of uniformity and the removal of all occasions of dispute and argument ; and secondly for the Muslim people, on the same ground, as a matter of discipline. There is another little harmony in the matter of the repetitions. Note that the race and starting point argument begins at v. 149 and is rounded off in the first part of v. 150 ; while the national and general argument beginning at v. 144 is rounded off in the latter part of v. 150. The latter argument includes the former, and is more widely worded : " wheresoever ye are " : which in the Arabic expression would imply three things ; in whatever circumstances ye are, or at whatever time ye are, or in whatever place ye are. I have spoken before of a sort of musical harmony in verbal repetitions : here there is a sort of pictorial harmony, as of a larger circle symmetrically including a smaller concentric circle.

151. A similar (favour
Have ye already received)¹⁵⁵
In that We have sent
Among you an Apostle
Of your own, rehearsing to you
Our Signs, and sanctifying
You, and instructing you
In Scripture and Wisdom,
And in new Knowledge.

۱۵۱- كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ
يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا
وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

152. Then do ye remember¹⁵⁶
Me; I will remember
You. Be grateful to Me,
And reject not Faith.

۱۵۲- فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ
وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُون ۝

SECTION 19.

153. **Q**h ye who believe! seek help
With patient Perseverance¹⁵⁷
And Prayer: for God is with
those
Who patiently persevere.

۱۵۳- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا
بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ۝

154. And say not of those
Who are slain in the way¹⁵⁸

۱۵۴- وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَن يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

155. This verse should be read with v. 150, of which the sentence is here completed. The argument is that in the grant of the Ka'ba Qibla, God was perfecting religion and fulfilling the prayer for the future made by Abraham. That prayer was threefold: (1) That Mecca should be made a sacred Sanctuary (ii. 126); (2) That a truly believing (Muslim) nation should be raised, with places of devotion there (ii. 128); and (3) that an Apostle should be sent among the Arabs with certain qualities (ii. 129), which are set out there and again repeated here to complete the argument.

156. The word "remember" is too pale a word for *zikr*, which has now acquired a large number of associations in our religious literature, especially Sūfi literature. In its verbal signification it implies: to remember; to praise by frequently mentioning; to rehearse; to celebrate or commemorate; to make much of; to cherish the memory of as a precious possession. In Sūfi devotions *zikr* represents both a solemn ritual and a spiritual state of mind or heart, in which the devotee seeks to realise the presence of God. Thus there is *zikr* of the mind and *zikr* of the heart. For beginners the one may lead to the other; but in many cases the two may be simultaneous. There is a subtler distinction, between the *zikr* that is open, and the *zikr* that is secret, corresponding to the two doors of the heart, the fleshly and the spiritual. In English some account (very imperfect) of *zikr* will be found in Hughes's Dictionary of Islam, covering over 14 columns.

From here on to v. 167 there is a great deal of mystic doctrine. That it is linked with the institution of the Qibla shows that the Qibla is itself connected with a great many root-ideas of the mystical interpretation of Unity.

157. See ii. 45 and n. An additional meaning implied in *sabr* is self restraint. Haqqāni defines it in his *Tafsīr* as following Reason and restraining Fear, Anger and Desire. What can be a higher reward for patience, perseverance, self-restraint and constancy than that God should be with us? For this promise opens the door to every kind of spiritual well-being.

158. The "patient perseverance and prayer" mentioned in the last verse is not mere passivity. It is active striving in the way of Truth, which is the way of God. Such striving is the spending of one's self in God's way, either through our property or through our own lives, or the lives of those nearest and dearest to us, or it may be the loss of all the fruits of a lifetime's labour not only in material goods but in some intellectual or moral gain, some position which seemed in our eyes to be eminently desirable in itself, but which we must cheerfully sacrifice if necessary for the Cause. With such sacrifice, our apparent loss may be our real gain: he that loses his life may really gain it; and the rewards or "fruits" that seem lost were mere impediments on our path to real inward progress.

These extreme sacrifices must be made under the orders and instructions of a righteous Imām, who can see the whole field of spiritual and physical warfare and judge justly of their necessity. Otherwise there is no inherent virtue in mere sacrifice as such or when exercised at the whim of an individual. Courage (the resistance to the test of Fear) and Self-denial (the resistance to the test of Hunger or Desire), are also, if they are to be virtues, subject to similar conditions.

Of God: "They are dead."
Nay, they are living,
Though ye perceive (them) not.

155. Be sure we shall test you
With something of fear
And hunger, some loss
In goods or lives or the fruits
(Of your toil), but give
Glad tidings¹⁵⁹ to those
Who patiently persevere,—

156. Who say, when afflicted
With calamity: "To God
We belong, and to Him
Is our return":—

157. They are those on whom
(Descend) blessings from God,
And Mercy,
And they are the ones
That receive guidance.

158. Behold! Safa and Marwa
Are among the Symbols¹⁶⁰
Of God. So if those who visit
The House¹⁶¹ in the Season
Or at other times,
Should compass them round,
It is no sin in them.
And if any one obeyeth his own

أَمْوَالُكُمْ
بَلْ أَحْيَاكُمْ وَلَٰكِنَّ لَّا تَشْعُرُونَ ٥

١٥٥- وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ
مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَفْسٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْعَمَلِ
وَبَشِيرِ الْغَيْبِ ۚ ۝
١٥٦- الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ مُّصِيبَةٌ
قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ۝

١٥٧- أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ
وَرَحْمَةٌ ۚ
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ۝

١٥٨- إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ
فَمَن حَمَلَ الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ
فَلَإِجْرًا عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوِّعَ بِهِمَا
وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرٌ ۚ

159. The glad tidings are the blessings of God in v. 157 or (which is the same thing) the promise in v. 153 that God will be with them.

160. The virtue of patient perseverance in faith leads to the mention of two symbolic monuments of that virtue. These are the two little hills of Safa and Marwa now absorbed in the city of Mecca, and close to the well of Zam zam. Here, according to tradition, the lady Hajar, mother of the infant Ismâ'il, prayed for water in the parched desert, and in her eager quest round these hills, she found her prayer answered and saw the Zam zam spring. Unfortunately the 'agan Arabs had placed a male and a female idol here, and their gross and superstitious rites caused offence to the early Muslims. They felt some hesitation in going round these places during the Pilgrimage. As a matter of fact they should have known that the Ka'ba (the House of God) had been itself defiled with idols, and was sanctified again by the purity of Muhammad's life and teaching. The lesson is that the most sacred things may be turned to the basest uses; that we are not therefore necessarily to ban a thing misused; that if our intentions and life are pure, God will recognise them even if the world cast stones at us because of some evil associations which they join with what we do, or with the people we associate with, or with the places which claim our reverence.

161. The House = the Sacred Mosque, the Ka'ba. The Season of regular Hajj culminates in the visit to 'Arafât on the ninth day of the month of Zul-hajj, followed by the circumambulation of the Ka'ba. A visit to the Sacred Mosque and the performance of the rites of pilgrimage at any other time is called an 'Umra. The symbolic rites are the same in either case, except that the 'Arafât rites are omitted in the 'Umra. The Safa and Marwa are included among the Monuments, as pointing to one of the highest of Muslim virtues.

Impulse to Good,—¹⁶²
Be sure that God
Is He Who recogniseth
And knoweth.

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝

159. Those who conceal
The clear (Signs) We have
Sent down, and the Guidance,
After We have made it
Clear for the People
In the Book, — on them
Shall be God's curse,
And the curse of those
Entitled to curse,—¹⁶³

۱۵۹-إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ
مَا آتَيْنَاكَ مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَى
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ
أُولَئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ
وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ۝

160. Except those who repent
And make amends
And openly declare (themselves) :
To them I turn ;
For I am Oft-returning,
Most Merciful.

۱۶۰-إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنَّوْا
فَأُولَئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ
وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝

161. Those who reject Faith,
And die rejecting,—
On them is God's curse,
And the curse of angels,
And of all mankind ;

۱۶۱-إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا
أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمُ لعْنَةُ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝

162. They will abide therein :¹⁶⁴
Their penalty will not
Be lightened, nor will
Respite be their (lot).

۱۶۲-خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ
وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ۝

163. And your God
Is One God :
There is no god
But He,

۱۶۳-وَالْهَكَمُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ ۖ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

162. The impulse should be to Good ; if once we are sure of this, we must obey it without hesitation, whatever people may say.

163. Those entitled to curse : i.e., angels and mankind (see v. 161 below) : the cursed ones will deprive themselves of the protection of God and of the angels, who are the Powers of God, and of the good wishes of mankind, because by contumaciously rejecting Faith, they not only sin against God but are false to their own manhood, which God created in the " best of moulds " (Q. xciv. 4). The terrible curses denounced in the Old Testament are set out in Deut. xxviii. 15-68. There is one difference. Here it is for the deliberate rejection of Faith, a theological term for the denying of our higher nature. There it is for a breach of the least part of the ceremonial Law.

164. Therein—in the curse. A curse is not a matter of words : it is a terrible spiritual state, opposite to the state of Grace. Can man curse ? Not of course in the same sense in which we speak of the curse of God. A mere verbal curse is of no effect. Hence the English saying : " A causeless curse will not come." But if men are oppressed or unjustly treated, their cries can ascend to God in prayer, and then it becomes God's " wrath " or curse, the deprivation of God's Grace as regards the wrong-doer.

Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.¹⁶⁵

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

SECTION 20.

164. Behold ! In the creation
Of the heavens and the earth ;
In the alternation
Of the Night and the Day ;
In the sailing of the ships
Through the Ocean
For the profit of mankind ;
In the rain which God
Sends down from the skies,
And the life which it gives
To an earth that is dead ;
In the beasts of all kinds
That He scatters
Through the earth ;
In the change of the winds,
And the clouds which they
Trail like their slaves
Between the sky and the earth ;—
Here indeed are Signs
For a people that are wise.¹⁶⁶

۱۶۴- اِنَّ فِيْ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
وَالْخِلَافِ الْيَوْمِ وَالْاَمْسِ
وَالْفُلْكِ الَّذِى يَمْجِىْ فِي الْبَحْرِ
بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مِنْ مَّاءٍ
فَلْيَنْظُرْ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ بَعْدَ زَوْنِهَا
وَيَنْظُرْ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَاخِلٍ
وَيَنْظُرْ فِي الْرِّجْحِ وَالْطَّيْرِ
السَّحَابِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْاَرْضِ
لَا يَتَذَكَّرُ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝

165. Yet there are men
Who take (for worship)
Others besides God,
As equal (with God) :

۱۶۵- وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ
اللّٰهِ اَنْدَادًا

165. Where the terrible consequences of Evil, i.e., the rejection of God, are mentioned, there is always stress laid on God's attributes of Grace and Mercy. In this case Unity is also stressed, because we have just been told about the Qibla symbol of unity and are about to pass to the theme of unity in diversity, in Nature and in the social laws of human society.

166. This magnificent Nature passage stands out like a hill in a landscape, enhancing the beauty of our view, and preparing us for the every-day laws and ordinances which follow.

Note its literary architecture. God is one; and among His wondrous Signs is the unity of design in the widest diversity of Nature. The Signs are taken from the features of beauty, power, and utility to man himself, and lead up to an appeal to Man's own intelligence and wisdom. We begin with the glory of the heavens and the earth, the wide spaces covered by man's imagination, remote and yet so near to his own life. The most striking every-day phenomenon resulting from the interrelations of the heavens and the earth is the alternation of day and night, regular and yet changing in duration with the Seasons and the latitudes of our globe. The night for rest, and the day for work; and we can think of the work in terms of nature's beauty; the stately ships "flowing" (as the original text has it) across the seas, for communications and merchandise as between men and men. The seas thus serve us no less than land, and the give-and-take as between sea, sky, and land, is further exemplified by the rain. The rain leads to the fertility of land, and here we are reminded of the contrast between the Winter's death of Nature and her revivification in the Spring. Here we are reminded of agriculture and the use we make of cattle and all kinds of living creatures. The word translated "beasts" has a wide meaning, including crawling creatures, insects, etc.—all contributing to the round of Nature's operations. This leads us on to the wonderful winds, the region of the air, which man is just beginning to explore and navigate. The personified winds drive the clouds in the sky like "slaves". Here is another aspect of clouds besides that of giving rain. The fleecy clouds are things of sunset beauty; at mid day they temper the glare of the sun; at all times they affect radiation and other processes going on in the sky. So we come back to the sky, rounding off the argument, and correlating our human life with the Will and Power of God, if we had the wisdom to see!

They love them
As they should love God.
But those of Faith are
Overflowing in their love
For God.
If only the unrighteous
Could see, they would see
The Penalty : that to God
Belongs all power, and God
Will strongly enforce
The Penalty.¹⁶⁷

يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ
وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرُونَ الْعَذَابَ
أَنَّهُمْ أَتَوْا اللَّهَ بِجَمِيعًا
وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ ○

166. Then would those
Who are followed
Clear themselves of those
Who follow (them) :
They would see the Penalty,
And all relations
Between them would be cut off.

۱۶۶- إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ
اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ
وَنَقَطَ لَهُمْ رُءُوسُهُمْ فِي الْمَوْتِ ○

167. And those who followed
Would say : " If only
We had one more chance,
We would clear ourselves
Of them, as they have
Cleared themselves of us."
Thus will God show them
(The fruits of) their deeds
As (nothing but) regrets.
Nor will there be a way
For them out of the Fire.¹⁶⁸

۱۶۷- وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا
لَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةٌ فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّأُوا
مِنَّا
كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ
عَلَيْهِمْ
وَمَا لَهُمْ نَجْرَجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ ؟

C. 50 -- The Society thus organised

(ii. 168-242.) Must live under laws

That would guide their every-day life,—

Based on eternal principles

Of righteousness and fair dealing,

167. Everything around and within us points to unity of purpose and design,—points to God. Yet there are foolish persons (unrighteous—those who deliberately use the choice given them to go wrong). They think something else is equal to God. Perhaps they even do lip service to God, but their heart is in their fetish,—unlike the heart of the righteous, who are wholly devoted and absorbed in the love of God. If only the unrighteous could see the consequences, they would see the terrible Penalty; and that all Power is in God's hands, not in that of any one else. Who are these others who are used as fetishes by the misguided? It may be: (1) creatures of their own imagination, or of their faculties misused; the idea lying behind Idols is akin to this, for no intelligent idol-worshipper owns to worshipping stocks and stones; or (2) good leaders whose names have been misused out of perversity to erect them to a position of equality with God; or (3) Powers of evil that deliberately mislead. When it comes to the inevitable consequences of blasphemy and the rejection of God, the eyes of all are opened and these false and artificial relations dissolve. The idea which was created into a fetish disowns its follower, i.e., is seen to have no reasonable basis in the life of the follower, and the follower is forced to renounce it as false. The good leaders whose names were misused would of course disown the misuse of their names, and the evil ones would take an unholy delight in exposing the facts. The Reality is now irresistible, but alas! at what cost?

168. Our deeds are irrevocable and we must pass through the Fire of repentance and regrets.

Cleanliness and sobriety,
 Honesty and helpfulness,
 One to another,—yet shaped
 Into concrete forms, to suit
 Times and circumstances,
 And the varying needs
 Of average men and women :
 The food to be clean and wholesome ;
 Blood-feuds to be abolished ;
 The rights and duties of heirs
 To be recognised after death,
 Not in a spirit of Formalism,
 But to help the weak and the needy
 And check all selfish wrong-doing ;
 Self-denial to be learnt by fasting ;
 The courage to fight in defence
 Of right, to be defined ;
 The Pilgrimage to be sanctified
 As a symbol of unity ;
 Charity and help to the poor
 To be organised ; unseemly riot
 And drink and gambling
 To be banished ; orphans to be protected ;
 Marriage, divorce and widowhood
 To be regulated ; and the rights of women,
 Apt to be trampled under foot,
 Now clearly affirmed.

SECTION 21.

186. **Oh** ye people !
 Eat of what is on earth,
 Lawful and good ;¹⁶⁹
 And do not follow
 The footsteps of the Evil One,
 For he is to you
 An avowed enemy.

١٦٨-يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ
 إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ○

169. We now come to the regulations about food. First (vv. 168-171) we have an appeal to all people, Muslims, Pagans, as well as the People of the Book ; then (vv. 172-3) to the Muslims specially ; then (vv. 174-6) to the sort of men who then (as some do now) either believe in too much formalism or believe in no restrictions at all. Islam follows the Golden Mean. All well-regulated societies lay down reasonable limitations. These become incumbent on all loyal members of any given society, and show what is " lawful " in that society. But if the limitations are reasonable, as they should be, the " lawful " will also coincide more and more with what is " good ".

Good : *ṭayyib*—Pure, clean, wholesome, nourishing, pleasing to the taste.

The general principle then would be : what is lawful and what is good, should be followed, not what is evil, or shameful, or foisted on by false ascription to divine injunctions, or what rests merely on the usage of ancestors, even though the ancestors were ignorant or foolish. An example of a shameful custom would be that among the Pagan Arabs of taking congealed blood and eating it fried.

169. For he commands you
What is evil
And shameful,
And that ye should say
Of God that of which
Ye have no knowledge.

١٦٩- إِنْ شَاءَ يَأْمُرْكُمْ
بِالشُّعْرِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ
وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ○

170. When it is said to them :
"Follow what God hath
revealed :"
They say : " Nay ! we shall follow
The ways of our fathers."
What ! even though their fathers
Were void of wisdom and
guidance ?

١٧٠- وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَفْقَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءُنَا
أَوْ لَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ
لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ○

171. The parable of those
Who reject Faith is
As if one were to shout
Like a goatherd, to things
That listen to nothing
But calls and cries :¹⁷⁰
Deaf, dumb, and blind,¹⁷¹
They are void of wisdom.

١٧١- وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي
يُنَادِي بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءً وَنِدَاءً
صُمٌّ بَلَمٌ عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ○

172. Oh ye who believe !
Eat of the good things
That We have provided for you,
And be grateful to God,
If it is Him ye worship.¹⁷²

١٧٢- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا
رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ رَائِيَاءَ تَعْبُدُونَ ○

173. He hath only forbidden you
Carrion,¹⁷³ and blood,
And the flesh of swine,
And that on which

١٧٣- إِنْ شَاءَ حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ
الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَخِمْهُنَّ

170. If you reject all faith, the highest wisdom and the most salutary regulations are lost on you. You are like "dumb driven cattle" who can merely hear calls, but cannot distinguish intelligently between shades of meaning or subtle differences of values.

171. Cf. ii. 18, where we are told that the rejectors of faith are "deaf, dumb and blind : they will not return to the path" Here the consequence of their not using their senses is that they have no wisdom. In each context there is just the appropriate deduction.

172. Gratitude for God's gifts is one form of worship.

173. Carrion : *maytat* : the original Arabic has a slightly wider meaning given to it in *Fiqah* (Religious Law) : anything that dies of itself, i.e., which is not expressly killed for food with the *Kalima* duly pronounced on it. But there are exceptions, e.g., fish and locusts are lawful, though they have not been made specially *halal* with the *Kalima*. But even fish or locusts as carrion would be obviously ruled out.

Any other name hath been invoked
Besides that of God.¹⁷⁴
But if one is forced by necessity,
Without wilful disobedience,
Nor transgressing due limits,—
Then is he guiltless.
For God is Oft-forgiving
Most Merciful.

وَمَا أَهْلَ بِهِ لغيرِ اللَّهِ
فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ
فَلَا إثمَ عَلَيْهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

174. Those who conceal
God's revelations in the Book,
And purchase for them
A miserable profit,—
They swallow into themselves¹⁷⁵
Naught but Fire;
God will not address them
On the Day of Resurrection,
Nor purify them:
Grievous will be
Their Penalty.

۱۷۴- إِنْ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ
مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
وَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
لُولَئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ
وَلَا يَكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ
وَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

175. They are the ones
Who buy Error
In place of Guidance
And Torment in place
Of Forgiveness.
Ah! what boldness
(They show) for the Fire!

۱۷۵- أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالَةَ
بِالْهُدَى
وَالْعَذَابَ بِالْغُفْرَةِ
فَمَا أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ

176. (Their doom is) because
God sent down the Book
In truth but those who seek
Causes of dispute in the Book

۱۷۶- ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ

174. For prohibited foods, cf. also Q. v. 4-5, vi. 121, 138-146. The teachers of *Fiqah* (Religious Law) work out the details with great elaboration. My purpose is to present general principles, not technical details. Carrion and blood as articles of food would obviously cause disgust to any refined person. So would swine's flesh where the swine live on offal. Where swine are fed artificially on clean food, the objections remain: (1) that they are filthy animals in other respects, and the flesh of filthy animals taken as food affects the eater; (2) that swine's flesh has more fat than muscle-building material; and (3) that it is more liable to disease than other kinds of meat; e.g., trichinosis, characterised by hair-like worms in the muscular tissue. As to food dedicated to idols or false gods, it is obviously unseemly for the Children of Unity to partake of it.

175. "They eat nothing but fire into their bellies" is a literal translation that produces an effect of rude inelegance which is not in the Arabic words. Even in the matter of food and drinks, the mission of Islam is to avoid the extremes of lawlessness on the one hand and extreme formalism on the other. It has laid down a few simple and very reasonable rules. Their infraction causes loss of health or physical powers in any case. But if there is further a spirit of subjective rebellion or fraud—passing off in the name of religion something which is far from the purpose,—the consequences become also moral and spiritual. Then it becomes a sin against Faith and Spirit. Continuing the physical simile, we actually swallow fire into ourselves. Imagine the torments which we should have if we swallowed fire into our physical body! They would be infinitely worse in our spiritual state, and they would go on to the Day of Resurrection, when we shall be deprived even of the words which the Judge speaks to a reasonable culprit, and we shall certainly not win His Grace and Mercy.

Are in a schism¹⁷⁶
Far (from the purpose).

لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ۝

SECTION 22.

177. It is not righteousness
That ye turn your faces
Towards East or West;
But it is righteousness—¹⁷⁷
To believe in God¹⁷⁸
And the Last Day,
And the Angels,
And the Book,
And the Messengers;
To spend of your substance,¹⁷⁹
Out of love for Him,
For your kin,
For orphans,
For the needy,
For the wayfarer,
For those who ask,
And for the ransom of slaves;
To be steadfast in prayer,¹⁸⁰
And practice regular charity;
To fulfil the contracts
Which ye have made;

۝۱- لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُولُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ
قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ
وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ
وَالرَّسُولِ
وَأَتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَى
وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسْكِينِ
وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ
وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ
وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا ۝

176. From the mere physical regulation we are at once lifted up into the sphere of morals and faith. For the one acts and reacts on the other. If we are constantly carping at wholesome regulations, we shall do nothing but cause division and schisms among the people, and ordered society would tend to break up.

177. As it to emphasise again a warning against deadening formalism, we are given a beautiful description of the righteous and God-fearing man. He should obey salutary regulations, but he should fix his gaze on the love of God and the love of his fellow-men. We are given four heads: (1) our faith should be true and sincere; (2) we must be prepared to show it in deeds of charity to our fellow-men; (3) we must be good citizens, supporting social organisation; and (4) our own individual soul must be firm and unshaken in all circumstances. They are interconnected, and yet can be viewed separately.

178. Faith is not merely a matter of words. We must realise the presence and goodness of God. When we do so, the scales fall from our eyes: all the falsities and fleeting nature of the Present cease to enslave us, for we see the Last Day as if it were today. We also see God's working in His world and in us: His Powers, (angels), His Messengers and His Message are no longer remote from us, but come within our experience.

179. Practical deeds of charity are of value when they proceed from love, and from no other motive. In this respect, also, our duties take various forms, which are shown in reasonable gradation: our kith and kin; orphans (including any persons who are without support or help); people who are in real need but who never ask (it is our duty to find them out, and they come before those who ask); the stranger, who is entitled to laws of hospitality; the people who ask and are entitled to ask, i. e., not merely lazy beggars, but those who seek our assistance in some form or another (it is our duty to respond to them); and the slaves (we must do all we can to give or buy their freedom). Slavery has many insidious forms, and all are included.

180. Charity and piety in individual cases do not complete our duties. In prayer and charity, we must also look to our organised efforts: where there is a Muslim State, these are made through the State, in facilities for public prayer, and public assistance, and for the maintenance of contracts and fair dealing in all matters.

And to be firm and patient,¹⁸¹
 In pain (or suffering)
 And adversity,
 And throughout
 All periods of panic.
 Such are the people
 Of truth, the God-fearing.

وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ
 الْبَأْسِ
 أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا
 وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ○

178. ○h ye who believe !
 The law of equality¹⁸²
 Is prescribed to you
 In cases of murder :¹⁸³
 The free for the free,
 The slave for the slave,
 The woman for the woman.
 But if any remission
 Is made by the brother¹⁸⁴
 Of the slain, then grant
 Any reasonable demand,¹⁸⁵
 And compensate him

۱۷۸-يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ
 الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ
 وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ
 وَالْأُنْثَىٰ بِالْأُنْثَىٰ
 فَمَنْ عَفَىٰ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ

181. Then come the Muslim virtues of firmness and patience. They are to "preserve the dignity of man, with soul erect" (Burns). Three sets of circumstances are specially mentioned for the exercise of this virtue: (1) bodily pain or suffering, (2) adversities or injuries of all kinds, deserved and undeserved, and (3) periods of public panic, such as war, violence, pestilence, etc.

182. Note first that this verse and the next make it clear that Islam has much mitigated the horrors of the pre-Islamic custom of retaliation. In order to meet the strict claims of justice, equality is prescribed, with a strong recommendation for mercy and forgiveness. To translate *qiyās*, therefore, by retaliation, is I think incorrect. The Latin legal term *Lex Talionis* may come near it, but even that is modified here. In any case it is best to avoid technical terms for things that are very different. "Retaliation" in English has a wider meaning, equivalent almost to returning evil for evil, and would more fitly apply to the blood-feuds of the Days of Ignorance. Islam says: if you *must* take a life for a life, at least there should be some measure of equality in it; the killing of the slave of a tribe should not involve a blood-feud where many free men would be killed; but the law of mercy, where it can be obtained by consent, with reasonable compensation, would be better.

Our law of equality only takes account of three conditions in civil society; free for free, slave for slave, woman for woman. Among free men or women, all are equal: you cannot ask that because a wealthy, or high-born, or influential man is killed, his life is equal to two or three lives among the poor or the lowly. Nor, in cases of murder, can you go into the value or abilities of a slave. A woman is mentioned separately because her position as a mother or an economic worker is different. She does not form a third class, but a division in the other two classes. One life having been lost, do not waste many lives in retaliation: at most, let the Law take one life under strictly prescribed conditions, and shut the door to private vengeance or tribal retaliation. But if the aggrieved party consents (and this condition of consent is laid down to prevent worse evils), forgiveness and brotherly love is better, and the door of Mercy is kept open. In Western law, no felony can be compounded.

183. The jurists have carefully laid down that the law of *qiyās* refers to murder only. *Qiyās* is not applicable to manslaughter, due to a mistake or an accident. There, there would be no capital punishment.

184. *The brother*: the term is perfectly general; all men are brothers in Islam. In this, and in all questions of inheritance, females have similar rights to males, and therefore the masculine gender imports both sexes. Here we are considering the rights of the heirs in the light of the larger brotherhood. In *vv.* 178-9 we have the rights of the heirs to life (as it were): in *vv.* 180-2 we proceed to the heirs to property.

185. The demand should be such as can be met by the party concerned, *i.e.*, within his means, and reasonable according to justice and good conscience. For example, a demand could not be made affecting the honour of a woman or a man. The whole penalty can be remitted if the aggrieved party agrees, out of brotherly love. In meeting that demand the culprit or his friends should equally be generous and recognise the good-will of the other side. There should be no subterfuges, no bribes, no unseemly bye-play: otherwise the whole intention of mercy and peace is lost.

With handsome gratitude.
This is a concession
And a Mercy
From your Lord.
After this whoever
Exceeds the limits
Shall be in grave penalty.

179. In the Law of Equality
There is (saving of) Life
To you, oh ye men of
understanding ;
That ye may
Restrain yourselves.

180. It is prescribed,
When death approaches
Any of you, if he leave
Any goods, that he make a
bequest
To parents and next of kin,¹⁸⁶
According to reasonable usage ;
This is due
From the God-fearing.

181. If anyone changes the bequest
After hearing it,
The guilt shall be on those
Who make the change.
For God hears and knows
(All things).

182. But if anyone fears
Partiality or wrong-doing¹⁸⁷
(On the part of the testator),
And makes peace between

فَاتَّبِعُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءِ الْيَدِ بِالْحَسَنِ
ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِمَّنْ رَزَقَكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ
مِّنْ أَجْدَادِي بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ
فَلَهُ عَذَابُ الْيَمِّ ○

١٧٩- وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَوةٌ
يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ○

١٨٠- كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ
إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ
وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ○

١٨١- مَن بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ
فَاتَّمَا أَشْءَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ○

١٨٢- مَن خَافَ مِنْ مُّوْجٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ أَثْمًا
فَاصْلَحْ بَيْنَهُمْ

186. There are rules of course for the disposal of intestate property. But it is a good thing that a dying man or woman should, of his own freewill, think of his parents and his next of kin, not in a spirit of injustice to others, but in a spirit of love and reverence for those who have cherished him. He must, however, do it "according to reasonable usage": the limitations will be seen further on.

187. A verbal will is allowed, but it is expected that the testator will be just to his heirs and not depart from what is considered equitable. For this reason definite shares were laid down for heirs later (see Q. iv. 11, etc.). These define or limit the testamentary power, but do not abrogate it. For example, amongst kin there are persons (e.g., an orphan grandson in the presence of surviving sons) who would not inherit under the intestate scheme, and the testator might like to provide for them. Again, there may be outsiders for whom he may wish to provide, and jurists have held that he has powers of disposition up to one-third of his property. But he must not be partial to one heir at the expense of another, or attempt to defeat lawful creditors. If he tries to do this, those who are witnesses to his oral disposition may interfere in two ways. One way would be to persuade the testator to change his bequest before he dies. The other way would be, after death, to get the interested parties together and ask them to agree to a more equitable arrangement. In such a case they are acting in good faith, and there is no fraud. They are doing nothing wrong. Islam approves of every lawful device for keeping brethren at peace, without litigation and quarrels. Except for this, the changing of the provisions of a Will is a crime, as it is under all Law,

(The parties concerned),
There is no wrong in him,
For God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

SECTION 23.

183. **Oh** ye who believe !
Fasting is prescribed to you
As it was prescribed ¹⁸⁸
To those before you,
That ye may (learn)
Self-restraint,—
184. (Fasting) for a fixed ¹⁸⁹
Number of days ;
But if any of you is ill,
Or on a journey, ¹⁹⁰
The prescribed number
(Should be made up)
From days later.
For those who can do it ¹⁹¹
(With hardship), is a ransom,
The feeding of one
That is indigent.
But he that will give
More, of his own free will,—
It is better for him.
And if ye fast,
It is better for you,
If ye only knew.

فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

۱۸۳-يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ
كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ۝

۱۸۴-أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ
فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا
أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ
فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ
وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ
مِسْكِينٍ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ
وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

188. As it was prescribed : this does not mean that the Muslim fast is like the other fasts previously observed, in the number of days, in the time or manner of the fast, or in other incidents ; it only means that the principle of self-denial by fasting is not a new one.

189. This verse should be read with the following verses, 185-188, in order that the incidents of the physical fast may be fully understood with reference to its spiritual meaning.

The Muslim fast is not meant for self-torture. Although it is stricter than other fasts, it also provides alleviations for special circumstances. If it were merely a temporary abstinence from food and drink, it would be salutary to many people, who habitually eat and drink to excess. The instincts for food, drink, and sex are strong in the animal nature, and temporary restraint from all these enables the attention to be directed to higher things. This is necessary through prayer, contemplation and acts of charity, not of the showy kind, but by seeking out those really in need. Certain standards are prescribed, but much higher standards are recommended.

190. Illness and journey must not be interpreted in an elastic sense : they must be such as to cause real pain or suffering if the fast were observed. For journeys, a minimum standard of three marches is prescribed by some Commentators ; others make it more precise by naming a distance of 16 farsakhs, equivalent to 48 miles. A journey of 8 or 9 miles on foot is more tiring than a similar one by bullock cart. There are various degrees of fatigue in riding a given distance on horseback or by camel or in a comfortable train or by motor car or by steamer, aeroplane or air ship. In my opinion the standard must depend on the means of locomotion and on the relative resources of the traveller. It is better to determine it in each case according to circumstances.

191. Those who can do it with hardship : such as aged people, or persons specially circumstanced. The Shāfi'is would include a woman expecting a child, or one who is nursing a baby, but on this point opinion is not unanimous, some holding that they ought to put in the fasts later, when they can.

185. Ramadhān is the month
In which was sent down |
The Qurān, as a guide ١٨٥
To mankind, also clear (Signs)
For guidance and judgment ١٨٦
(Between right and wrong).
So every one of you
Who is present (at his home)
During that month
Should spend it in fasting,
But if anyone is ill,
Or on a journey,
The prescribed period
(Should be made up)
By days later.
God intends every facility
For you; He does not want
To put you to difficulties.
He wants you to complete
The prescribed period,
And to glorify Him ١٨٧
In that He has guided you;
And perchance ye shall be
grateful.

186. When My servants
Ask thee concerning Me,
I am indeed
Close (to them): I listen
To the prayer of every
Suppliant when he calleth on Me:
Let them also, with a will,
Listen to My call,
And believe in Me:
That they may walk
In the right way. ١٨٨

187. Permitted to you,
On the night of the fasts,
Is the approach to your wives.
They are your garments

١٨٥- شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ
هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ
وَيُبَيِّنُ مِنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ
فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ
وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا
أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ
فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ
يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ
وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ
وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْوَجْدَةَ
وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمْ
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ○

١٨٦- وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي
عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ
أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ
إِذَا دَعَانِ
فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي
وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بَوَائِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ○

١٨٧- أَجَلٌ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةُ الضَّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى
نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ

192. Judgment (between right and wrong): *Furqān* = the criterion or standard by which we judge between right and wrong. See ii. 53 n.

193. The regulations are again and again coupled with an insistence on two things: (a) the facilities and concessions given, and (b) the spiritual significance of the fast, without which it is like an empty shell without a kernel. If we realise this, we shall look upon Ramadhān, not as a burden, but as a blessing, and shall be duly grateful for the lead given to us in this matter.

194. This verse 186 and v 188 are not foreign to the subject of Ramadhān, but emphasize its spiritual aspect. Here we are told of Prayer and the nearness of God, and in v. 188 we are asked not to "eat up" other people's substance.

And ye are their garments.¹⁹⁵

God knoweth what ye
Used to do secretly among
yourselves;

But He turned to you
And forgave you;
So now associate with them,
And seek what God
Hath ordained for you,¹⁹⁶
And eat and drink,
Until the white thread
Of dawn appear to you
Distinct from its black thread,¹⁹⁷
Then complete your fast
Till the night appears;¹⁹⁸
But do not associate
With your wives
While ye are in retreat¹⁹⁹
In the mosques. Those are²⁰⁰
Limits (set by) God:
Approach not nigh thereto.
Thus doth God make clear
His Signs to men: that
They may learn self-restraint.

وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لِّهِنَّ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ
تُخْتَفُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ
فَالَّذِينَ بِالْأَشْرَوْهِنَّ
وَابْتَغُوا مَّا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا
حَتَّى يَبْيُنَ لَكُمْ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ
الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ
ثُمَّ ارْجِعُوا إِلَى الْبَيْتِ
وَلَا تَبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَارِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ
بِذَلِكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا
كَذَلِكَ يَبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ○

188. And do not eat up

Your property among yourselves
For vanities, nor use it
As bait for the judges,
With intent that ye may
Eat up wrongfully and knowingly.

١٨٨- وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ
وَتَذْلُلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ
يَتَأْكَلُوا تَرْغِيًّا مِنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ

195. Men and women are each other's garments: i.e., they are for mutual support, mutual comfort, and mutual protection, fitting into each other as a garment fits the body. A garment also is both for show and concealment. The question of sex is always delicate to handle: here we are told that even in such matters a clear, open, and honest course is better than fraud or self-deception. The sex instinct is classed with eating and drinking, an animal thing to be restrained, but not to be ashamed of. The three things are prohibited during the fast by day, but permitted after the fast is broken at night till the next fast commences.

196. There is difference of opinion as to the exact meaning of this. I would connect this as a parallel clause with the clause "eat and drink", which follows, all three being governed by "until the white thread", etc. That is, all three things must stop when the fast begins again in the early morning. Or it may mean: What is permitted is well enough, but seek the higher things ordained for you.

197. Those in touch with Nature know the beautiful effects of early dawn. First appear thin white indefinable streaks of light in the east; then a dark zone supervenes; followed by a beautiful pinkish white zone clearly defined from the dark. This is the true dawn; after that the fast begins.

198. *Till the night appears*: From the actual practice of the Holy Apostle, this is rightly interpreted to mean: "Till sunset."

199. Retreat to the Mosques by night after the fast is broken is specially recommended towards the end of Ramaḡān, so that all carnal temptations may be avoided.

200. I construe these limits as applying to the whole of the regulations about fasts.

A little of (other) people's
property ²⁰¹

وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

SECTION 24.

189. They ask thee
Concerning the New Moons.²⁰²
Say : They are but signs
To mark fixed periods of time
In (the affairs of) men,
And for Pilgrimage.
It is no virtue if ye enter
Your houses from the back :
It is virtue if ye fear God.
Enter houses
Through the proper doors : ²⁰³
And fear God :
That ye may prosper.
190. Fight in the cause of God
Those who fight you,²⁰⁴
But do not transgress limits ;
For God loveth not transgressors.
191. And slay them
Wherever ye catch them,
And turn them out
From where they have

۱۸۹- يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ
قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ
وَلَيْسَ بِالْإِيمَانِ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ
ظُهُورِهَا
وَلَكِنَّ الْإِيمَانَ مِنَ الثَّقَلِ ۖ
وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ۝

۱۹۰- وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ
وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ۝

۱۹۱- وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ
وَاخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ

201 Besides the three primal physical needs of man, which are apt to make him greedy, there is a fourth greed in society, the greed of wealth and property. The purpose of fasts is not completed until this fourth greed is also restrained. Ordinarily honest men are content if they refrain from robbery, theft, or embezzlement. Two more subtle forms of the greed are mentioned here. One is where one uses one's own property for corrupting others—judges or those in authority—so as to obtain some material gain even under the cover and protection of the law. The words translated "other people's property" may also mean "public property". A still more subtle form is where we use our own property or property under our own control—"among yourselves" in the Text—for vain or frivolous uses. Under the Islamic standard this is also greed. Property carries with it its own responsibilities. If we fail to understand or fulfil them, we have not learnt the full lesson of self-denial by fasts.

202. There were many superstitions connected with the New Moon, as there are to the present day. We are told to disregard such superstitions. As a measure of time, where the lunar calendar is used, the New Moon is one great sign, for which people watch with eagerness. Muslim festivals, including the Pilgrimage, are fixed by the appearance of the New Moon. The Arabs, among other superstitions, had one which made them enter their houses by the back door during or after the Pilgrimage. This is disapproved, for there is no virtue in any such artificial restrictions. All virtue proceeds from the love and fear of God.

203. This is a Muslim proverb now, and much might be written about its manifold meanings. A few may be noted here. (1) If you enter a society, respect its manners and customs. (2) If you want to achieve an object honourably, go about it openly and not "by a backdoor". (3) Do not beat about the bush. (4) If you wish success in an undertaking, provide all the necessary instruments for it.

The subject of the New Moon provides a good transition between the Ramadhān fast, which begins and ends with the New Moon, the Pilgrimage, whose ten days commence with the New Moon, and the Wars which Islam had to wage in self-defence against the Pagans, who wanted to exclude them from the Pilgrimage after they had driven them out of house and home.

204. War is only permissible in self-defence, and under well-defined limits. When undertaken, it must be pushed with vigour, but not relentlessly, but only to restore peace and freedom for the worship of God. In any case strict limits must not be transgressed : women, children, old and infirm men should not be molested, nor trees and crops cut down, nor peace withheld when the enemy comes to terms.

Turned you out;
For tumult and oppression
Are worse than slaughter;
But fight them not²⁰⁵
At the Sacred Mosque,
Unless they (first)
Fight you there;
But if they fight you,
Slay them.
Such is the reward
Of those who suppress faith.²⁰⁶

وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ
وَلَا تَقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ
فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ
كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ○

192. But if they cease,
God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

١٩٢- فَإِنْ أَنتَبَحوا
فَرَأَى اللَّهُ عَفْوَ وَرَحِيمَهُ ○

193. And fight them on
Until there is no more
Tumult or oppression,
And there prevail
Justice and faith in God;²⁰⁷
But if they cease,²⁰⁸
Let there be no hostility
Except to those
Who practise oppression.

١٩٣- وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ
وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ
فَإِنْ أَنتَبَحوا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى
الظَّالِمِينَ ○

205. This passage is illustrated by the events that happened at Hudaibiya in the sixth year of the Hijra, though it is not clear that it was revealed on that occasion. The Muslims were by this time a strong and influential community. Many of them were exiles from Mecca, where the Pagans had established an intolerant autocracy, persecuting Muslims, preventing them from visiting their homes, and even keeping them out by force from performing the Pilgrimage during the universally recognised period of truce. This was intolerance, oppression, and autocracy to the last degree, and the mere readiness of the Muslims to enforce their rights as Arab citizens resulted without bloodshed in an agreement which the Muslims faithfully observed. The Pagans, however, had no scruples in breaking faith, and it is unnecessary here to go into subsequent events.

In general it may be said that Islam is the religion of peace, goodwill, mutual understanding, and good faith. But it will not acquiesce in wrong-doing, and its men will hold their lives cheap in defence of honour, justice, and the religion which they hold sacred. Their ideal is that of heroic virtue combined with unselfish gentleness and tenderness, such as is exemplified in the life of the Apostle. They believe in courage, obedience, discipline, duty, and a constant striving, by all the means in their power, physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, for the establishment of truth and righteousness. They know that war is an evil, but they will not flinch from it if their honour demands it and (a most important condition) a righteous *Imām* (such as Muḥammad was *par excellence*) commands it, for then they know they are not serving carnal ends. In other cases, war has nothing to do with their faith, except that it will always be regulated by its humane precepts.

206. *Suppress faith*: in the narrower as well as the larger sense. If they want forcibly to prevent you from exercising your sacred rites, they have declared war on your religion, and it would be cowardice to ignore the challenge or to fail in rooting out the tyranny.

207. *Justice and faith*. The Arabic word is *Dīn*, which is comprehensive. It implies the ideas of indebtedness, duty, obedience, judgment, justice, faith, religion, customary rites, etc. The clause means: "until there is *Dīn* for God."

208. If the opposite party cease to persecute you, your hostility ends with them as a party, but it does not mean that you become friends to oppression. Your fight is against wrong; there should be no rancour against men.

194. **And the prohibited month** ²⁰⁰

For the prohibited month, —
And so for all things prohibited, —
There is the law of equality.
If then any one transgresses
The prohibition against you,
Transgress ye likewise
Against him.
But fear God, and know ²¹⁰
That God is with those
Who restrain themselves.

۱۹۴- الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ
وَالْحُرُمَتُ قِصَاصٌ
لَّيِّنَ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ
فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى
عَلَيْكُمْ

195. And spend of your substance

In the cause of God,
And make not your own hands
Contribute to your destruction; ²¹¹
But do good;
For God loveth those
Who do good.

وَأَقِمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ○

۱۹۵- وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا

بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ

وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ○

196. **And complete**

The *Hajj* or '*umra*' ²¹²

۱۹۶- وَإِيتُوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ

209. *Harām* = prohibited, sacred. The month of Pilgrimage (*ḡul-hajj*) was a sacred month, in which warfare was prohibited by Arab custom. The month preceding (*ḡul-qa'd*) and the month following (*Muharram*) were included in the prohibition, and *Muharram* was specially called *al-Harām*. Possibly *Muharram* is meant in the first line, and the other months and other prohibited things in "all things prohibited". In Rajab, also, war was prohibited. If the pagan enemies of Islam broke that custom and made war in the prohibited months, the Muslims were free also to break that custom but only to the same extent as the others broke it. Similarly the territory of Mecca was sacred, in which war was prohibited. If the enemies of Islam broke that custom, the Muslims were free to do so to that extent. Any convention is useless if one party does not respect it. There must be a law of equality. Or perhaps the word reciprocity may express it better.

210. At the same time the Muslims are commanded to exercise self-restraint as much as possible. Force is a dangerous weapon. It may have to be used for self-defence or self-preservation, but we must always remember that self-restraint is pleasing in the eyes of God. Even when we are fighting, it should be for a principle, not out of passion.

211. Every fight requires the wherewithals for the fight, the "sinews of war". If the war is just and in the cause of God, all who have wealth must spend it freely. That may be their contribution to the Cause, in addition to their personal effort, or if for any reason they are unable to fight. If they hug their wealth, perhaps their own hands are helping in their own self destruction. Or if their wealth is being spent, not in the Cause of God, but in something which pleases their fancy, it may be that the advantage goes to the enemy, and they are by their action helping their own destruction. In all things, their standard should be, not selfishness, but the good of their brethren, for such good is pleasing to God.

212. See ii. 158 n. The *Hajj* is the complete pilgrimage, of which the chief rites are during the first ten days of the month of *ḡul-hajj*. The '*umra*' is a less formal pilgrimage at any time of the year. In either case, the intending pilgrim commences by putting on a simple garment of unsewn cloth in two pieces when he is some distance yet from Mecca. The putting on of the pilgrim garb (*iḥrām*) is symbolical of his renouncing the vanities of the world. After this and until the end of the pilgrimage he must not wear other clothes, or ornaments, anoint his hair, use perfumes, hunt or do other prohibited acts. The completion of the pilgrimage is symbolised by the shaving of the head for men, and the cutting off of a few locks of the hair of the head for women, the putting off of the *iḥrām* and the resumption of the ordinary dress.

Here we are told: (1) that having once undertaken the pilgrimage, we must complete it; (2) that we must do it not for worldly ends, but as a symbol of our service and worship to God; (3) that if we are prevented, for any reason, from completing the rites, a symbolical completion can be made by sending an offering for sacrifice; sacrifice would have been offered if we had been present personally: here we would send the sacrifice vicariously, and when it is likely to reach the place of sacrifice, we could then shave our heads and resume our ordinary dress and avocations.

In the service of God.
 But if ye are prevented
 (From completing it),
 Send an offering
 For sacrifice,
 Such as ye may find,
 And do not shave your heads
 Until the offering reaches
 The place of sacrifice.
 And if any of you is ill,²¹³
 Or has an ailment in his scalp,
 (Necessitating shaving),
 (He should) in compensation
 Either fast, or feed the poor,
 Or offer sacrifice;
 And when ye are
 In peaceful conditions (again),²¹⁴
 If any one wishes
 To continue the 'umra
 On to the hajj,
 He must make an offering,
 Such as he can afford,
 But if he cannot afford it,
 He should fast
 Three days during the hajj
 And seven days on his return,
 Making ten days in all.
 This is for those
 Whose household
 Is not in (the precincts²¹⁵
 Of) the Sacred Mosque.
 And fear God,
 And know that God
 Is strict in punishment.²¹⁶

فَإِنْ أَحْصَيْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ
 وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ
 حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ
 فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا
 أَوْ بِأَمَةٍ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِمَّنْ صَامَ
 أَوْ صَدَقَةٌ أَوْ سَلَكٌ
 فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ
 فَمَنْ تَشَاءُ بِالْعُسْطَرَّةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ
 فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ
 فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فِصْيَامَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ
 وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ
 تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ
 ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلَهُ حَاضِرِي السَّعْيِ
 الْحَرَامِ
 وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

213. If any one is taken ill after putting on the *Ihrām*, so that he has to put on other clothes, or if he has trouble or skin disease in his head or insects in his hair, and he has to shave his head before completion, he should fast (three days, say the Commentators), or feed the poor, or offer sacrifice.

214. When this was revealed, the city of Mecca was in the hands of the enemies of Islam, and the regulations about the fighting and the pilgrimage came together and were interconnected. But the revelation provides, as always, for the particular occasion, and also for normal conditions. Mecca soon passed out of the hands of the enemies of Islam. People sometimes came long distances to Mecca before the Pilgrimage season began. Having performed the 'umra, they stayed on for the formal Hajj. In case the pilgrim had spent his money, he is shown what he can do, rich or poor, and yet hold his head high among his fellows, as having performed all rites as prescribed.

215. For residents in Mecca the question does not arise. They are there every day, and there is no question of 'umra for them.

216. This closes the section about the duties of fighting and introduces the connected question of pilgrimage in a sort of transition. Fighting is connected with fear, and while it is meritorious to obey God, we are warned that we must not allow our selfish passions to carry us away, because it is in such times of stress that our spirit is tested. Verse 195 ended with a benediction for those who do good. This verse ends with a warning to those who take advantage of God's cause to transgress the limits, for the punishment is equally sure. The next verse shows us the pitfalls we must avoid in a large concourse of people.

SECTION 25.

197. ~~For~~ Hajj

Are the months well known.²¹⁷
 If any one undertakes
 That duty therein,
 Let there be no obscenity,
 Nor wickedness,
 Nor wrangling
 In the Hajj.
 And whatever good
 Ye do, (be sure)
 God knoweth it.
 And take a provision²¹⁸
 (With you) for the journey,
 But the best of provisions
 Is right conduct.
 So fear Me,
 Oh ye that are wise.

١٩٧- الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُومَةٌ
 مَنْ قَرَضَ فِيهِمْ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ
 وَلَا فُسُوقَ
 وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ
 وَمَا تَعْمَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمْهُ اللَّهُ
 وَتَزَكُّوْا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَى
 وَالتَّقْوَى يَأْتِي الْأَكْبَابَ ٥

198. It is no crime in you
 If ye seek of the bounty
 Of your Lord (during
 pilgrimage).²¹⁹
 Then when ye pour down
 From (Mount) Arafāt,
 Celebrate the praises of God
 At the Sacred Monument,²²⁰

١٩٨- لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ
 أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
 فَإِذَا أَقْبَضْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ
 فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ

217. *The months well known*: the months of Shawwāl, Zul-qā'd, and Zul-hajj (up to the 10th or the 13th) are set apart for the rites of Hajj. That is to say, the first rites may begin as early as the beginning of Shawwāl, with a definite approach to Mecca, but the chief rites are concentrated on the first ten days of Zul-hajj, and specially on the 8th, 9th and 10th of that month, when the concourse of pilgrims reaches its height. The chief rites may be briefly enumerated: (1) The wearing of the pilgrim garment (*ihrām*) from certain points definitely fixed on all the roads to Mecca; after this the pilgrimage prohibitions come into operation and the pilgrim is dedicated to worship and prayer and the denial of vanities; (2) the going round the Ka'ba seven times (*tawāf*), typifying activity, with the kissing of the little Black Stone built into the wall, the symbol of concentration in the love of God; (3) after a short prayer at the Station of Abraham (Q ii. 125), the pilgrim goes to the hills Safā and Marwa, (Q ii. 158), the symbols of patience and perseverance; (4) the great Sermon (*Khuṭba*) on the 7th of Zul-hajj, when the whole assembly listens to an exposition of the meaning of Hajj; (5) the visit on the eighth, of the whole body of pilgrims to the Valley of Minā (about six miles north of Mecca), where the pilgrims halt and stay the night, proceeding on the ninth to the plain and hill of 'Arafāt, about five miles further north, which commemorates the reunion of Adam and Eve after their wanderings, and is also called the Mount of Mercy; (6) the tenth day, the 'Id Day, the day of Sacrifice, when the sacrifice is offered in the Valley of Minā, and the symbolic ceremony of casting seven stones at the Evil One is performed on the first occasion; it is continued on subsequent days; both rites are connected with the story of Abraham: this is the 'Id-ul-Adhḥā; note that the ceremony is symbolically connected with the rejection of evil in thought, word, and deed. This closes the Pilgrimage, but a stay of two or three days after this is recommended, and this is called *Tashrīq*.

218. It is recommended that pilgrims should come with provisions, so that they should not be compelled to resort to begging. But, as usual, our thought is directed at once from the physical to the spiritual. If provisions are required for a journey on earth, how much more important to provide for the final journey into the future world? The best of such provisions is right conduct, which is the same as the fear of God.

219. Legitimate trade is allowed, in the interests both of the honest trader, who can thus meet his own expenses, and of the generosity of pilgrims, who would otherwise be greatly inconvenienced for the necessities of life. But the profit must be sought as from the "bounty of God". There should be no profiteering, or trade "tricks". Good honest trade is a form of service to the community, and therefore to God.

220. About midway between 'Arafāt and Minā (see note to ii. 197) is a place called Muzdalifa where the Holy Apostle offered up a long prayer. It has thus become a Sacred Monument and pilgrims are directed to follow that example on their return. A special reason for this is given in the note following.

And celebrate His praises
As He has directed you,
Even though, before this,
Ye went astray.²²¹

199. Then pass on
At a quick pace from the place
Whence it is usual
For the multitude²²²
So to do, and ask
For God's forgiveness.
For God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

200. So when ye have
Accomplished your holy rites,
Celebrate the praises of God,
As ye used to celebrate
The praises of your fathers,—²²³
Yea, with far more
Heart and soul.
There are men who say:
"Our Lord! Give us
(Thy bounties) in this world!"
But they will have
No portion in the Hereafter.²²⁴

201. And there are men who say:
"Our Lord! Give us
Good in this world
And good in the Hereafter,
And defend us
From the torment
Of the Fire!"

وَالذِّكْرُ كَمَا هَدَيْتُمْ
وَلَنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لِنَصَالِيْن

١٩٩- ثُمَّ اَنْضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ اَفَاضَ
النَّاسُ
وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلّٰهِ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ

٢٠- فَاِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ
فَاذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ
كَمَا ذَكَرْتُمْ اٰبَاءَكُمْ اَوْ اَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا
فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُوْلُ رَبَّنَا اٰتِنَا فِي
الدُّنْيَا
وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَقٍ

٢٠١- وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَقُوْلُ رَبَّنَا اٰتِنَا
فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً
وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

221. Certain arrogant tribes living in Mecca used not to go to 'Arafât with the crowd but to stop short at Muzdalifa. They are rebuked for their arrogance and told that they must perform all the rites like the rest of the pilgrims. There is equality in Islam.

222. See the last note. Towards the end of the Pilgrimage the crowd is very great, and if any people loitered after 'Arafât, it would cause great confusion and inconvenience. The pace has therefore to be quick for every one, a very salutary regulation. Every member of the crowd must think of the comfort and convenience of the whole mass.

223. After the Pilgrimage, in Pagan times, the pilgrims used to gather in assemblies in which the praises of ancestors were sung. As the whole of the pilgrimage rites were spiritualised in Islam, so this aftermath of the Pilgrimage was also spiritualised. It was recommended for pilgrims to stay on two or three days after the pilgrimage, but they must use them in prayer and praise to God. See v. 203 below.

224. If you hasten to get all the good things of the world, and only think of them and pray for them, you would lose the higher things of the future. The proper Muslim attitude is neither to renounce this world nor to be so engrossed in it as to forget the spiritual future.

202. To these will be allotted ²²⁵
What they have earned;
And God is quick in account.

أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا
وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ٢٠٢

203. Celebrate the praises of God
During the Appointed Days. ²²⁶
But if any one hastens
To leave in two days,
There is no blame on him,
And if any one stays on,
There is no blame on him,
If his aim is to do right.
Then fear God, and know
That ye will surely
Be gathered unto Him.

وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ
فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ
فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ
وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ لَبِئْسَ أَتَقَىٰ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ٢٠٣

204. There is the type of man ²²⁷
Whose speech
About this world's life
May dazzle thee,
And he calls God to witness
About what is in his heart;
Yet is he the most contentious
Of enemies.

قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَيَشْهَدُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ
وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ ٢٠٤

205. When he turns his back,
His aim everywhere
Is to spread mischief
Through the earth and destroy
Crops and cattle.
But God loveth not mischief.

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ
لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ ٢٠٥

206. When it is said to him:
"Fear God,"
He is led by arrogance
To (more) crime.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ
أَخَذَهُ الْعُرَّةُ ۚ بَالِدًا ٢٠٦

225. Our spiritual account is mounting up, both on the debit and credit side. In worldly accounts, both our profits and our losses may be delayed. But in God's books there is no delay. Our actions go before us. (See ii. 95. n.)

226. *The Appointed Days*: the three days after the tenth, when the Pilgrims stay on in the Valley of Minā for prayer and praise. They are the days of *Tashrīq* (see ii. 200. n.). It is optional for pilgrims to leave on the second or third day.

227. The two contrasted types of men mentioned in vv. 200 and 201 are here further particularised: the glib hypocrite who appears worldly-wise but plans harm, contrasted with the sincere believer who is prepared to suffer martyrdom for his faith. The Commentators give names of people who exemplified these types. The mischief-maker has a smooth tongue and indulges in plausible talk with many oaths. He appears to be worldly-wise, and though you may despise him for his worldliness, and you may not realise his frauds. Behind your back he is an implacable enemy. He stirs up quarrels, and causes all sorts of mischief to you or your friends. He can never win God's love, and we are warned against his tricks.

Enough for him is Hell;—
What a bed of misery! ²²⁸

207. And there is the type of man
Who gives his life
To earn the pleasure of God;
And God is full of kindness
To (His) devotees. ²²⁹

208. Oh ye who believe!
Enter into Islam
Whole-heartedly;
And follow not
The footsteps
Of the Evil One;
For he is to you
An avowed enemy.

209. If ye backslide
After the clear (Signs)
Have come to you,
Then know that God
Is Exalted, Wise. ²³⁰

210. Will they wait
Until God comes to them
In canopies of clouds,
With angels (in His train)
And the question
Is (thus) settled?
But to God
Do all questions
Go back (for decision). ²³¹

SECTION 26.

211. Ask the Children of Israel ²³²
How many Clear (Signs)

فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَيْسَ الْبِهَادُ ○

٢٠٧- وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ
ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ○

٢٠٨- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ
إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ○

٢٠٩- فَإِن زَلَلْتُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمُ
الْبَيِّنَاتُ
فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ○

٢١٠- هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ
فِي ظُلُمٍ مِّنَ الْغَمَامِ
وَالسَّلَاطِكَةِ وَتُخْصَى الْأُمُورُ
فَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ○

٢١١- سَلِّ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ كَمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِّنْ

228. According to the English saying, "As you have made your bed, so you must lie in it."

229. This second type of man,—firm, sincere, devoted, willing to give his life for the faith that is in him—was common in early Islam. Such men were its pillars. Through persecution, obloquy, torture, threat to their own lives or the lives of those dear to them, they stood by their leader, and many of them gave their lives. That is what established Islam. We are asked in the next verse to follow this type and shun the other or evil type. If we do that, our Cause is safe.

230. If you backslide after the conviction has been brought home to you, you may cause some inconvenience to the Cause, or to those who counted upon you, but do not be so arrogant as to suppose that you will defeat God's Power and Wisdom. The loss will be your own.

231. If faith is wanting, all sorts of excuses are made to resist the appeal of God. They might and do say: "Oh yes! we shall believe if God appears to us with His angels in His glory!" In other words they want to settle the question in their way, and not in God's way. That will not do. The decision in all questions belongs to God. If we are true to Him, we wait for His times and seasons, and do not expect Him to wait on ours.

232. The Israelites under Moses were shown God's glory and many clear Signs and yet they went after their own ways, and preferred their own whims and fancies. So do people in all ages. But let them not deceive themselves. God's justice is sure, and when it comes, it will be strict and unmistakable to those who reject His grace.

We have sent them.
But if any one,
After God's favour
Has come to him,
Substitutes (something else),
God is strict in punishment.²³³

212. The life of this world
Is alluring to those
Who reject faith,
And they scoff at those
Who believe.
But the righteous
Will be above them
On the Day of Resurrection;
For God bestows His abundance
Without measure
On whom He will.²³⁴

213. Mankind was one single nation,
And God sent Messengers
With glad tidings and warnings;
And with them He sent
The Book in truth,
To judge between people
In matters wherein
They differed;
But the People of the Book,
After the clear Signs
Came to them, did not differ
Among themselves,
Except through selfish contumacy.
God by His Grace
Guided the Believers
To the Truth,
Concerning that
Wherein they differed.
For God guides
Whom He will
To a path
That is straight.

214. Or do ye think
That ye shall enter

إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ مَنْ يُبَدِّلِ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ○

٢١٢- زَيْنَ الدِّينِ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
وَيَسْتَحْسِرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوَقَّعَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
وَاللَّهُ يَزِدُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
بِعَافٍ حِسَابٍ ○

٢١٣- كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً
فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنْذِرِينَ
وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ
لِيُحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ
فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أَوْفَوْهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ
فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ
مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِرُؤْيَاهِ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ
يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ○

٢١٤- أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ

233. Cf. ii. 196 (end) where the question was of those who do not fear God. Here the question is of those who reject God's Signs.

234. God's gifts in this world seem unequal, and sometimes those get them who seem to deserve them least. God's bounty is unlimited, to the just as well as the unjust. In His wisdom He may give to whomsoever He pleases. The account is not taken now, but will be taken in the end, when the balance will be redressed.

The Garden (of Bliss)
Without such (trials)
As came to those
Who passed away
Before you?
They encountered
Suffering and adversity,
And were so shaken in spirit
That even the Apostle
And those of faith
Who were with him
Cried: "When (will come)
The help of God?"
Ah! Verily, the help of God
Is (always) near!

وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ
مَسَّتْهُمْ الْبَاسَاءُ وَالْمُزْزَاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا
حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
مَعَهُ
مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ
الْكَرَى إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ ○

215. They ask thee
What they should spend
(In charity). Say: "Whatever
Ye spend that is good,²³⁵
Is for parents and kindred
And orphans
And those in want
And for wayfarers.
And whatever ye do
That is good,—God
Knoweth it well.

٢١٥- يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ ه
قُلْ مَا أَفْنَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ
فِلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ
وَالْيَتَامَى وَالسَّكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ
وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ○

216. Fighting is prescribed
For you, and ye dislike it.²³⁶
But it is possible
That ye dislike a thing
Which is good for you,
And that ye love a thing
Which is bad for you.
But God knoweth,
And ye know not.

٢١٦- كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ
وَعَلَى أَنْ تُكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ
وَعَلَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا
وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ○

235. Three questions arise in charity: (1) What shall we give? (2) to whom shall we give? and (3) how shall we give? The answer is here. Give anything that is good, useful, helpful, valuable. It may be property or money; it may be a helping hand; it may be advice; it may be a kind word; "whatever ye do that is good" is charity. On the other hand, if you throw away what is useless, there is no charity in it. Or if you give something with a harmful intent, e.g., a sword to a mad man, or a drug or sweets or even money to some one whom you want to entrap or corrupt, it is no charity but a gift of damnation. To whom should you give? It may be tempting to earn the world's praise by a gift that will be talked about, but are you meeting the needs of those who have the first claim on you? If you are not, you are like a person who defrauds creditors: it is no charity. Every gift is judged by its unselfish character: the degree of need or claim is a factor which you should consider; if you disregard it, there is something selfish behind it. How should it be given? As in the sight of God; this shuts out all pretence, show, and insincerity.

236. To fight in the cause of Truth is one of the highest forms of charity. What can you offer that is more precious than your own life? But here again the limitations come in. If you are a mere brawler, or a selfish aggressive person, or a vainglorious bully, you deserve the highest censure. If you offer your life to the righteous Imam, who is only guided by God, you are an unselfish hero. God knows the value of things better than you do.

SECTION 27.

217. They ask thee
Concerning fighting
In the Prohibited Month.²³⁷
Say : " Fighting therein
Is a grave (offence) ;
But graver is it
In the sight of God
To prevent access
To the path of God,
To deny Him,
To prevent access
To the Sacred Mosque,
And drive out its members."²³⁸
Tumult and oppression²³⁹
Are worse than slaughter.
Nor will they cease
Fighting you until
They turn you back
From your faith
If they can.
And if any of you
Turn back from their faith
And die in unbelief,
Their works will bear no fruit
In this life
And in the Hereafter ;
They will be
Companions of the Fire
And will abide therein.

218. Those who believed
And those who suffered exile
And fought (and strove and
struggled)
In the path of God,—
They have the hope
Of the Mercy of God;
And God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

٢١٧- يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ
قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ
وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ
وَالسُّبْحِ الْحَرَامِ
وَالْإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِندَ اللَّهِ
وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ
وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يَقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ
عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا
وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ
عَن دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ
وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ
فَأُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ○
٢١٨- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا
وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
أُولَئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ○

237. *Prohibited Month* : See ii. 194. n.

238. The intolerance and persecution of the Pagan clique at Mecca caused untold hardships to the holy Messenger of Islam and his early disciples. They bore all with meekness and long-suffering patience until the holy one permitted them to take up arms in self-defence. Then they were twitted with breach of the custom about Prohibited Months, though they were driven to fight during that period against their own feeling in self-defence. But their enemies not only forced them to engage in actual warfare, but interfered with their conscience, persecuted them and their families, openly insulted and denied God, kept out the Muslim Arabs from the Sacred Mosque, and exiled them. Such violence and intolerance are deservedly called worse than slaughter.

239. Cf. ii. 191, 193, where a similar phrase occurs. *Fitna*=trial, temptation, as in ii. 102; or tumult, sedition, oppression, as here; M. M. A., H. G. S., and M. P. translate "persecution" in this passage, which is also legitimate, seeing that persecution is the suppression of some opinion by violence, force, or threats.

219. **They ask thee**
Concerning wine ²⁴⁰ and
gambling. ²⁴¹

Say : " In them is great sin,
And some profit, for men ;
But the sin is greater
Than the profit."

They ask thee how much
They are to spend ;
Say : " What is beyond ²⁴²
Your needs."

Thus doth God
Make clear to you
His Signs : in order that
Ye may consider —

220. (Its bearings) on
This life and the Hereafter. ²⁴³

They ask thee
Concerning orphans. ²⁴⁴
Say : " The best thing to do
Is what is for their good ;
If ye mix
Their affairs with yours,
They are your brethren ;
But God knows

۲۱۹- يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْمِرِ
قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ
وَمَنَافَعُ لِّلنَّاسِ
وَالْإِثْمُ كَٱلَّذِى مِن تَلْفِعِهِمَا
وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ ۚ
قُلِ الْعَقْوُ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ٱلآيَٰتِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ۝
۲۲۰- فِى ٱلْءَنْيَآءِ وَٱلْآخِرَةِ

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْيَتَامَىٰ
قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَّهُمْ خَيْرٌ
وَإِن تَخَافُوهُمْ فَلَئِخْوَانُكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ

240. Wine : *Khamr* : literally understood to mean the fermented juice of the grape ; applied by analogy to all fermented liquor, and by further analogy to any intoxicating liquor or drug. There may possibly be some benefit in it, but the harm is greater than the benefit, especially if we look at it from a social as well as an individual point of view.

241. Gambling : *mamsir* : literally, a means of getting something too easily, getting a profit without working for it ; hence gambling. That is the principle on which gambling is prohibited. The form most familiar to the Arabs was gambling by casting lots by means of arrows, on the principle of a lottery : the arrows were marked, and served the same purpose as a modern lottery ticket. Something, e.g., the carcase of a slaughtered animal, was divided into unequal parts. The marked arrows were drawn from a bag. Some were blank and those who drew them got nothing. Others indicated prizes, which were big or small. Whether you got a big share or a small share, or nothing, depended on pure luck, unless there was fraud also on the part of some persons concerned. The principle on which the objection is based is : that, even if there is no fraud, you gain what you have not earned, or lose on a mere chance. Dice and wagering are rightly held to be within the definition of gambling. But insurance is not gambling, when conducted on business principles. Here the basis for calculation is statistics on a large scale, from which mere chance is eliminated. The insurers themselves pay premia in proportion to risks, exactly and statistically calculated.

242. Hoarding is no use either to ourselves, or to any one else. We should use the wealth we need ; any superfluities we must spend in good works or in charity.

243. Gambling and intemperance are social as well as individual sins. They may ruin us in our ordinary every-day worldly life, as well as our spiritual future. In case it is suggested that there is no harm in a little indulgence, we are asked to think over all its aspects, social and individual,—worldly and spiritual.

244. For orphans the best rule is to keep their property, household, and accounts separate, lest there should be any temptation to get a personal advantage to their guardian by mixing them with the guardian's property, household or accounts,—also to keep clear of any ideas of marriage, where this fiduciary relation exists. Q. vi. 132 may possibly suggest complete separation. But it may be an economy and an advantage to the orphan to have his property and accounts administered with the guardian's property and accounts and to have him live in the guardian's household, or to marry into the guardian's family, especially where the orphan's property is small and he or she has no other friend. The test is : what is best in the orphan's interests ? If the guardian does fall into temptation, even if human law does not detect him, he is told he is sinning in God's sight and that should keep him straight.

The man who means mischief
From the man who means good.
And if God had wished,
He could have put you
Into difficulties : He is
Indeed Exalted, Wise." 245

الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ
وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ٥

221. Do not marry
Unbelieving women,
Until they believe :
A slave woman who believes
Is better than an unbelieving
woman,

Even though she allure you.
Nor marry (your girls)
To unbelievers until
They believe :
A man slave who believes
Is better than an unbeliever,
Even though he allure you. 246
Unbelievers do but
Beckon you to the Fire.
But God beckons by His Grace
To the Garden (of Bliss)
And forgiveness,
And makes His Signs
Clear to mankind :
That they may
Celebrate His praise.

٢٢١- وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَ
وَلَأَمَةٌ مُؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ
وَلَوْ أَجَبَكُمْ
وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنُوا
وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ
خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ
أُولَٰئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ
وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ
وَالْعُفُوفَةِ يَدْعُو بِهِ
وَيُبَيِّنُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ٥

SECTION 28.

222. They ask thee
Concerning women's courses.
Say : They are
A hurt and a pollution : 247

٢٢٢- وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ
قُلْ هُوَ آذٌ

245. The idea in Islam is not to make God's law a burdensome fetter, but to ease a man's path in all kinds of difficult situations by putting him on his honour and trusting him. The strictest probity is demanded of him, but if he falls short of it, he is told that he cannot escape God's punishment even though he may evade human punishment.

246. Marriage is a most intimate communion, and the mystery of sex finds its highest fulfilment when intimate spiritual harmony is combined with the physical link. If religion is at all the real influence in life to both parties or to either party, a difference in this vital matter must affect the lives of both more profoundly than differences of birth, race, language, or position in life. It is therefore only right that the parties to be married should have the same spiritual outlook. If two persons love each other, their outlook in the highest things of life must be the same. Note that religion is not here a mere label, or a matter of custom or birth. The two persons may have been born in different religions, but if, by their mutual influence, they come to see the truth in the same way, they must openly accept the same rites and the same social brotherhood. Otherwise the position will become impossible individually and socially.

247. *Aizah* : hurt, pollution. Both aspects must be remembered. Physical cleanliness and purity make for health, bodily and spiritual. But the matter should be looked at from the woman's point of view as well as the man's. To her there is danger of hurt, and she should have every consideration. In the animal world, instinct is a guide which is obeyed. Man should in this respect be better : he is often worse.

So keep away from women
In their courses, and do not
Approach them until
They are clean.
But when they have
Purified themselves,
Ye may approach them
In any manner, time, or place ²⁴⁸
Ordained for you by God.
For God loves those
Who turn to Him constantly
And He loves those
Who keep themselves pure and
clean.

223. Your wives are
As a tilth ²⁴⁹ unto you;
So approach your tilth
When or how ye will;
But do some good act
For your souls beforehand;
And fear God,
And know that ye are
To meet Him (in the Hereafter),
And give (these) good tidings ²⁵⁰
To those who believe.

224. ~~And~~ make not
God's (name) an excuse
In your oaths against
Doing good, or acting rightly,
Or making peace
Between persons;

فَاعْتَرِزُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحْضِ
وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى يَطْهَرْنَ
فَإِذَا طَهَّرْنَ
فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ
وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ○

٢٢٣- نِسَاءُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَكُمْ
فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ
وَقَدْ مُوا إِلا أَنْفُسُكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلْقَوَةٌ
وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ○

٢٢٤- وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْصَةً
لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا
وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ

248. *Haithu* : A comprehensive word referring to manner, time, or place. The most delicate matters are here referred to in the most discreet and yet helpful terms. In sex morality, manner, time, and place are all important; and the highest standards are set by social laws, by our own refined instinct of mutual consideration, and above all, by the light shed by the highest Teachers from the wisdom which they receive from our Maker, Who loves purity and cleanliness in all things.

249. Sex is not a thing to be ashamed of, or to be treated lightly, or to be indulged to excess. It is as solemn a fact as any in life. It is compared to a husbandman's tilth; it is a serious affair to him: he sows the seed in order to reap the harvest. But he chooses his own time and mode of cultivation. He does not sow out of season nor cultivate in a manner which will injure or exhaust the soil. He is wise and considerate and does not run riot. Coming from the simile to human beings, every kind of mutual consideration is required, but above all, we must remember that even in these matters there is a spiritual aspect. We must never forget our souls, and that we are responsible to God.

It was carnal-minded men who invented the doctrine of original sin: "Behold," says the Psalmist, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalms ii. 5). This is entirely repudiated by Islam, in which the office of father and mother is held in the highest veneration. Every child of pure love is born pure. Celibacy is not necessarily a virtue, and may be a vice.

250. Our highest spiritual ambition should be the hope of meeting God. To uphold such a hope is to give glad tidings to people of faith. It would only be unrepentant sinners who would fear the meeting. Note how the most sensuous matters are discussed frankly, and immediately taken up into the loftiest regions of spiritual upliftment.

For God is One
Who heareth and knoweth²⁵¹
All things.

وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ○

225. God will not
Call you to account
For thoughtlessness
In your oaths,
But for the intention
In your hearts;²⁵²
And He is
Oft-forgiving
Most Forbearing.

٢٢٥- لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ
بِالْغُرُوحِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ
وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ○

226. For those who take
An oath for abstinence
From their wives,
A waiting for four months
Is ordained;
If then they return,
God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

٢٢٦- لِلَّذِينَ يُؤْثِرُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ
تَرْبُصَ أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ
فَإِنْ قَاءُوا
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ○

227. But if their intention
Is firm for divorce,
God heareth
And knoweth all things.²⁵³

٢٢٧- وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ○

228. Divorced women
Shall wait concerning themselves

٢٢٨- وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ

251. The Arabs had many special kinds of oaths, for each of which they had a special name in their language. Some of them related to sex matters, and caused misunderstanding, alienation, division, or separation between husband and wife. This and the following three verses refer to them. In v. 224 we are first of all told in perfectly general terms that we are not to make an oath in the name of God an excuse for not doing the right thing when it is pointed out to us, or for refraining from doing something which will bring people together. If we were swayed by anger or passion or mere caprice, God knows our inmost hearts, and right conduct and not obstinacy or quibbling is what He demands from us.

252. It has been held that thoughtless oaths, if there is no intention behind them, can be expiated by an act of charity.

253. Vv. 225-27 should be read together with v. 224. The latter, though it is perfectly general, leads up to the other three.

The Pagan Arabs had a custom very unfair to women in wedlock, and this was suppressed by Islam. Sometimes, in a fit of anger or caprice, a husband would take an oath by God not to approach his wife. This deprived her of conjugal rights, but at the same time kept her tied to him indefinitely, so that she could not marry again. If the husband was remonstrated with, he would say that his oath by God bound him. Islam in the first place disapproved of thoughtless oaths, but insisted on proper solemn intentional oaths being scrupulously observed. In a serious matter like that affecting a wife, if the oath was put forward as an excuse, the man is told that it is no excuse at all. God looks to intention, not mere thoughtless words. The parties are allowed a period of four months to make up their minds and see if an adjustment is possible. Reconciliation is recommended, but if they are really determined against reconciliation, it is unfair to keep them tied indefinitely. Divorce is the only fair and equitable course, though, as the Apostle has declared, of all things permitted, divorce is the most hateful in the sight of God. In the circumstances, God will forgive, for He knows the real grievances of each of the parties, and will hear the cry of all who suffer.

For three monthly periods.
Nor is it lawful for them
To hide what God
Hath created in their wombs,
If they have faith
In God and the Last Day.
And their husbands
Have the better right
To take them back
In that period, if
They wish for reconciliation.²⁵⁴
And women shall have rights
Similar to the rights
Against them, according
To what is equitable;
But men have a degree
(Of advantage) over them.²⁵⁵
And God is Exalted, Wise.

SECTION 29.

229. **AI** divorce is only ²⁵⁶
Permissible twice: after that,
The parties should either hold
Together on equitable terms,
Or separate with kindness.²⁵⁷
It is not lawful for you,
(Men), to take back
Any of your gifts (from your
wives),
Except when both parties
Fear that they would be
Unable to keep the limits

بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ
وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ
أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ
إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَيُؤْتُوا لَهُنَّ شَيْءٌ بِرِزْقِهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ
أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا
وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَ دَرَجَةٌ
وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

٢٢٩-الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَيْنِ
فَلَمَّا كُنْتُمْ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيَةٍ
بِإِحْسَانٍ
وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا بِمَا
أَنْتُمْ مُؤْتَوْنَ شَيْئًا
إِلَّا أَنْ يُحَاطَ أَكَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ

254. Islam tries to maintain the married state as far as possible, especially where children are concerned, but it is against the restriction of the liberty of men and women in such vitally important matters as love and family life. It will check hasty action as far as possible, and leave the door to reconciliation open at many stages. Even after divorce a suggestion of reconciliation is made, subject to certain precautions (mentioned in the following verses) against thoughtless action. A period of waiting ('*iddat*') for three monthly courses is prescribed, in order to see if the marriage conditionally dissolved is likely to result in issue. But this is not necessary where the divorced woman is a virgin: Q. xxxiii. 49. It is definitely declared that women and men shall have similar rights against each other.

255. The difference in economic position between the sexes makes the man's rights and liabilities a little greater than the woman's. Q. iv. 34 refers to the duty of the man to maintain the woman, and to a certain difference in nature between the sexes. Subject to this, the sexes are on terms of equality in law, and in certain matters the weaker sex is entitled to special protection.

256. Where divorce for mutual incompatibility is allowed, there is danger that the parties might act hastily, then repent, and again wish to separate. To prevent such capricious action repeatedly, a limit is prescribed. Two divorces (with a reconciliation between) are allowed. After that the parties must definitely make up their minds, either to dissolve their union permanently, or to live honourable lives together in mutual love and forbearance—to "hold together on equitable terms," neither party worrying the other nor grumbling nor evading the duties and responsibilities of marriage.

257. If a separation is inevitable, the parties should not throw mud at each other, but recognise what is right and honourable on a consideration of all the circumstances. In any case a man is not allowed to ask back for any gifts or property he may have given to the wife. This is for the protection of the economically weaker sex. Lest that protective provision itself work against the woman's freedom, an exception is made in the next clause.

Ordained by God.²⁵⁸
 If ye (judges) do indeed
 Fear that they would be
 Unable to keep the limits
 Ordained by God,
 There is no blame on either
 Of them if she give
 Something for her freedom.
 These are the limits
 Ordained by God;
 So do not transgress them.
 If any do transgress
 The limits ordained by God,
 Such persons wrong
 (Themselves as well as others).²⁵⁹

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ
 فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ
 بِهِ
 تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ
 فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا
 وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ
 فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ○

230. So if a husband
 Divorces his wife (irrevocably),²⁶⁰
 He cannot, after that,
 Re-marry her until
 After she has married
 Another husband and
 He has divorced her.
 In that case there is
 No blame on either of them
 If they re-unite, provided
 They feel that they
 Can keep the limits
 Ordained by God.
 Such are the limits
 Ordained by God,
 Which He makes plain
 To those who understand.

٢٣٠- فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا
 فَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُ
 مِنْ بَعْدِ حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرًا
 فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا
 فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا
 أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ ظَنَّا أَنْ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ
 اللَّهِ
 وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ
 يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ○
 ٢٣١- وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَّغْنِ

231. When ye divorce²⁶¹
 Women, and they fulfil

258. All the prohibitions and limits prescribed here are in the interests of good and honourable lives for both sides, and in the interests of a clean and honourable social life, without public or private scandals. If there is any fear that in safeguarding her economic rights, her very freedom of person may suffer, the husband refusing the dissolution of marriage, and perhaps treating her with cruelty, then, in such exceptional cases, it is permissible to give some material consideration to the husband, but the need and equity of this should be submitted to the judgment of impartial judges, i. e., properly constituted courts. A divorce of this kind is called *khuṭ'a*.

259. *Wrong (themselves as well as others)*: *ẓālimūn*: for the root meaning of *ẓulm* see n. 51, ii. 35.

260. This is in continuation of the first sentence of v. 229. Two divorces followed by re-union are permissible; the third time the divorce becomes irrevocable, until the woman marries some other man and he divorces her. This is to set an almost impossible condition. The lesson is: if a man loves a woman he should not allow a sudden gust of temper or anger to induce him to take hasty action. What happens after two divorces, if the man takes her back? See v. 231.

261. If the man takes back his wife after two divorces, he must do so only on equitable terms, i. e., he must not put pressure on the woman to prejudice her rights in any way, and they must live clean and honourable lives, respecting each other's personalities. There are here two conditional clauses: (1) when ye divorce women, and (2) when they fulfil their '*iddat*': followed by two consequential clauses, (3) take them back on equitable terms, or (4) set them free with kindness. The first is connected with the third, and the second with the fourth. Therefore if the husband wishes to resume the marital relations, he need not wait for '*iddat*'. But if he does not so wish, she is free to marry some one else after '*iddat*'. For the meaning of '*iddat*' see n. 254 above.

The term of their ('*Iddat*),
 Either take them back
 On equitable terms
 Or set them free
 With kindness;
 But do not take them back
 To injure them, (or) to take
 Undue advantage;²⁶²
 If any one does that,
 He wrongs his own soul.
 Do not treat God's Signs
 As a jest,²⁶³
 But solemnly rehearse²⁶⁴
 God's favours on you,
 And the fact that He
 Sent down to you
 The Book
 And Wisdom,
 For your instruction.
 And fear God,
 And know that God
 Is well acquainted
 With all things.

أَجَلَهُنَّ نَأْمِسُكُوهُنَّ بِعُرُوفٍ
 أَوْ سَرَاحُهُنَّ بِعُرُوفٍ
 وَلَا تَسِكُوهُنَّ ضَرَارًا لِنَفْسِكُمْ
 وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ
 فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ
 وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوعًا
 وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
 وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ
 لِيُعْظِمَكُمْ بِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 وَاعْلَمُوا
 أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

٢٣٢

SECTION 30.

232. ~~W~~hen ye divorce
 Women, and they fulfil
 The term of their ('*Iddat*),
 Do not prevent them²⁶⁵
 From marrying
 Their (former) husbands,
 If they mutually agree
 On equitable terms.
 This instruction
 Is for all amongst you,
 Who believe in God
 And the Last Day.
 That is (the course

٢٣٢- وَإِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلْيُكُنَّ أَجَلُهُنَّ
 فَلَا تَقْضُوا لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَرْوَاجَهُنَّ
 إِذَا تَرَاضَوْا بَيْنَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
 ذَلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ
 مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ
 يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

262. Let no one think that the liberty given to him can be used for his own selfish ends. If he uses the law for the injury of the weaker party, his own moral and spiritual nature suffers.

263. These difficult questions of sex relations are often treated as a joke. But they profoundly affect our individual lives, the lives of our children, and the purity and well-being of the society in which we live. This aspect of the question is reiterated again and again.

264. *Rehearse*: *gikr*. Cf. ii. 151 and n. 156. We are asked to remember in our own minds, and to proclaim and praise, and be proud of, God's favours on us. His favours are immeasurable: not the least are His Revelations, and the wisdom which He has given to us to enable us to judge and act up to His guidance.

265. The termination of a marriage bond is a most serious matter for family and social life. And every lawful device is approved which can equitably bring back those who have lived together, provided only there is mutual love and they can live on honourable terms with each other. If these conditions are fulfilled, it is not right for outsiders to prevent or hinder re-union. They may be swayed by property or other considerations. This verse was occasioned by an actual case that was referred to the holy Apostle in his lifetime.

Making for) most virtue
And purity amongst you.
And God knows,
And ye know not.

ذِكْرُ أُنْكِي لَكُمْ وَأَطْفَارُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ○

233. **¶** The mothers shall give suck ²⁶⁶

To their offspring
For two whole years,
If the father desires
To complete the term.
But he shall bear the cost
Of their food and clothing
On equitable terms.
No soul shall have
A burden laid on it
Greater than it can bear.
No mother shall be
Treated unfairly
On account of her child,
Nor father
On account of his child.
An heir shall be chargeable
In the same way,
If they both decide
On weaning,
By mutual consent,
And after due consultation,
There is no blame on them.
If ye decide
On a foster-mother
For your offspring,
There is no blame on you,
Provided ye pay (the mother)
What ye offered,
On equitable terms.
But fear God and know
That God sees well
What ye do.

٢٣٣- وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ

حَوْلَيْنَ كَامِلَيْنِ

لَئِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَنْفِرَ الرِّضَاعَةُ

وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ

وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

لَا تَضَارُّ وَالِدٌ بِبَوْلِيهَا

وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِبَوْلِيهَا

وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ

فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا

وَشَفَاوَةٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا

وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ

أَنْ تَسْتَرْضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ

فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ

إِذَا سَأَلْتُمْ بِمَا آتَيْتُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ○

234. **¶** If any of you die
And leave widows behind,

٢٣٤- وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ وَيُكَلِّمُونَ وَيُذَارُونَ

266. As this comes in the midst of the regulations on divorce, it applies primarily to cases of divorce, where some definite rule is necessary, as the father and mother would not, on account of the divorce, probably be on good terms, and the interests of the children must be safeguarded. As, however, the wording is perfectly general, it has been held that the principle applies equally to the father and mother in wedlock: each must fulfil his or her part in the fostering of the child. On the other hand, it is provided that the child shall not be used as an excuse for driving a hard bargain on either side. By mutual consent they can agree to some course that is reasonable and equitable, both as regards the period before weaning (the maximum being two years) and the engagement of a wet-nurse, or (by analogy) for artificial feeding. But the mother's privileges must not be curtailed simply because by mutual consent she does not nurse the baby. In a matter of this kind the ultimate appeal must be to godliness, for all legal remedies are imperfect and may be misused.

They shall wait concerning
 themselves
 Four months and ten days: ²⁶⁷
 When they have fulfilled
 Their term, there is no blame
 On you if they dispose
 Of themselves in a just
 And reasonable manner.
 And God is well acquainted
 With what ye do.

أَرْبَعًا أَشْهُرًا وَعَشْرًا ۖ فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ
 فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا
 فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
 وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ۝

235. There is no blame
 On you if ye make
 An offer of betrothal
 Or hold it in your hearts. ²⁶⁸
 God knows that ye
 Cherish them in your hearts:
 But do not make a secret contract
 With them except in terms
 Honourable, nor resolve on the tie
 Of marriage till the term
 Prescribed is fulfilled.
 And know that God
 Knoweth what is in your hearts,
 And take heed of Him;
 And know that God is
 Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing

٢٣٥- وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا عَرَضْتُمْ بِهِ
 مِنْ خُطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَكْنُتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ
 عَلَيَّهِنَّ اللَّهُ أَنْتُمْ سَعَتُكُمْ وَنَهْنُ
 وَلَكِنْ لَا تَوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا
 قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ۚ وَلَا تَعْرِضُوا عِدَّةَ النِّكَاحِ
 حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ
 وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ
 فَاحْذَرُوهُ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ۝

SECTION 31.

236. There is no blame on you
 If ye divorce women
 Before consummation
 Or the fixation of their dower;
 But bestow on them
 (A suitable gift),
 The wealthy
 According to his means,
 And the poor
 According to his means;—

٢٣٦- لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ
 مَا لَمْ تَنكِحُوهُنَّ
 أَوْ تَقَرَّضُوا إِلَيْهِنَّ فَرِيضَةً ۚ وَمِمَّا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ
 عَلَى الْمُدْرِسِ قَدَرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدَرُهُ ۚ

267. The 'Iddat of widowhood (four months and ten days) is longer than the 'Iddat of divorce (three monthly courses, ii 228). In the latter the only consideration is to ascertain if there is any unborn issue of the marriage dissolved. This is clear from xxxiii. 49, where it is laid down that there is no 'Iddat for virgin divorcees. In the former there is in addition the consideration of mourning and respect for the deceased husband. In either case, if it is proved that there is unborn issue, there is of course no question of remarriage for the woman until it is born and for a reasonable time afterwards. Meanwhile her maintenance on a reasonable scale is chargeable to the late husband or his estate.

268. A definite contract of remarriage for the woman during her period of 'Iddat of widowhood is forbidden as obviously unseemly, as also any secrecy in such matters. It would bind the woman at a time when she is not fitted to exercise her fullest judgment. But circumstances may arise when an offer (open for future consideration but not immediately decided) may be to her interests, and this is permissible. In mystic interpretation the cherishing of love in one's heart without outward show or reward is the true test of sincerity and devotion.

A gift of a reasonable amount
Is due from those
Who wish to do the right thing.

مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ○

237. And if ye divorce them
Before consummation,
But after the fixation
Of a dower for them,
Then the half of the dower
(Is due to them), unless
They remit it
Or (the man's half) is remitted ²⁶⁹
By him in whose hands
Is the marriage tie; ²⁷⁰
And the remission
(Of the man's half)
Is the nearest to righteousness.
And do not forget
Liberality between yourselves.
For God sees well
All that ye do.

۲۳۷- وَإِنْ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ
مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ
لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ
إِلَّا أَنْ يُعْفُونَ
أَوْ يُعْفُوا إِلَيْهِ
يَسِيرُهُمْ عُقْدَةُ الْبَيْعِ
وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى
وَلَا تَنَسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ○

238. Guard strictly
Your (habit of) prayers,
Especially the Middle Prayer; ²⁷¹
And stand before God
In a devout (frame of mind).

۲۳۸- حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ
وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَى
وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ خَشِعِينَ ○

239. If ye fear (an enemy), ²⁷²
Pray on foot, or riding,
(As may be most convenient),
But when ye are
In security, celebrate
God's praises in the manner
He has taught you,
Which ye knew not (before).

۲۳۹- فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا
فَلِذَا أَمْنْتُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ
كَمَا عَلَّمَكُمْ
مَالَكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ○

269. The law declares that in such a case half the dower fixed shall be paid by the man to the woman. But it is open to the woman to remit the half due to her or to the man to remit the half which he is entitled to deduct, and thus pay the whole.

270. Him in whose hands is the marriage tie: According to Hanafi doctrine this is the husband himself, who can ordinarily by his act dissolve the marriage. It therefore behoves him to be all the more liberal to the woman and pay her the full dower even if the marriage was not consummated.

271. The Middle Prayer: *Ṣalātul-wuṣṭā*: may be translated "the best or the most excellent prayer." Authorities differ as to the exact meaning of this phrase. The weight of authorities seems to be in favour of interpreting this as the 'Aṣr prayer (in the middle of the afternoon). This is apt to be most neglected, and yet this is the most necessary, to remind us of God in the midst of our worldly affairs. There is a special Sūra (S. ciii) entitled 'Aṣr, of which the mystic meaning is appropriately dealt with under that Sūra.

272. Vv. 238-39 are parenthetical, introducing the subject of prayer in danger. This is more fully dealt with in iv. 102.

240. Whose of you
Who die and leave widows
Should bequeath
For their widows
A year's maintenance
And residence; ²⁷³
But if they leave
(The residence),
There is no blame on you
For what they do
With themselves,
Provided it is reasonable.
And God is Exalted, Wise.

۲۴۰-وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ
أَزْوَاجًا وَوَصِيَّةً لَّأَزْوَاجِهِمْ
مَّتَّاعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ
فَلَوْلَا خُرُوجُنَا عَلَيْكُمْ
فِي مَا قَعَلْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ مِنْ مَّعْرُوفٍ
وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝

241. For divorced women
Maintenance (should be provided)
On a reasonable (scale).
This is a duty
On the righteous.

۲۴۱-وَالْمُطَلَّاتُ مَتَاعًا ۖ يَا مَعْرُوفِينَ
حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝

242. Thus doth God
Make clear His Signs
To you: in order that
Ye may understand.

۲۴۲-كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ۝

C. 51.— Fighting in defence of Truth and Right
(ii. 243-253.) Is not to be undertaken light-heartedly,

Nor to be evaded as a duty.
Life and Death are in the hands of God.
Not all can be chosen to fight
For God. It requires constancy,
Firmness, and faith. Given these,
Large armies can be routed
By those who battle for God,
As shown by the courage of David,
Whose prowess single-handed
Disposed of the Philistines.
The mission of some of the apostles,
Like Jesus, was different,—
Less wide in scope than that
Of Muṣṭafā. God's plan
Is universal, and He carries it out
As He wills.

273. Opinions differ whether the provision (of a year's maintenance, with residence), for a widow is abrogated by the share which the widow gets (one eighth or one fourth) as an heir (Q. iv. 12). I do not think it is. The bequest (where made) takes effect as a charge on the property, but the widow can leave the house before the year is out, and presumably the maintenance then ceases.

SECTION 32.

243. Didst thou not

Turn by vision to those
Who abandoned their homes,
Though they were thousands
(In number), for fear of death?
God said to them: "Die":²⁷⁴
Then He restored them to life.²⁷⁵
For God is full of bounty
To mankind, but
Most of them are ungrateful.

۲۴۳- اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ خَرَجُوْا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ
وَهُمْ اَلُوْفٌ حَدَّرَ الْعَرَبُ
فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللّٰهُ مُوتُوْا ثُمَّ اَنْجَاهُمْ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلٰى النَّاسِ
وَلَكِنْ اَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ۝

244. Then fight in the cause

Of God, and know that God
Heareth and knoweth all things.²⁷⁶

۲۴۴- وَكَايِلُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ
وَاعْلَمُوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ۝

245. Who is he

That will loan to God
A beautiful loan,²⁷⁶ which God
Will double unto his credit
And multiply many times?
It is God that giveth (you)
Want or Plenty,
And to Him shall be
Your return.

۲۴۵- مَنْ ذَا الَّذِيْ
يُقْرِضُ اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا
فَيُضَاعِفُهٗ لَكَ اَضْعَافًا كَثِيْرَةً
وَاللّٰهُ يَغْنِيْكَ وَيَبْخُطُّ
وَرَايَهٗ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ۝

246. Hast thou not

Turned thy vision to the Chiefs
Of the Children of Israel
After (the time of) Moses?²⁷⁷

۲۴۶- اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الْمَلَاِ
مِنْ بَنِيْۤ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مُوْسٰى

274. We now return to the subject of *Jihād*, which we left at *vv.* 214-216. We are to be under no illusion about it. If we are not prepared to fight for our faith, with our lives and all our resources, both our lives and our resources will be wiped out by our enemies. As to life, God gave it, and a coward is not likely to save it. It has happened again and again in history that men who tamely submitted to be driven from their homes although they were more numerous than their enemies, had the sentence of death pronounced on them for their cowardice, and they deserved it. But God gives further and further chances in His mercy. This is a lesson to every generation. The Commentators differ as to the exact episode referred to, but the wording is perfectly general, and so is the lesson to be learnt from it.

275. For God's cause we must fight, but never to satisfy our own selfish passions or greed, for the warning is repeated: "God heareth and knoweth all things": all deeds, words, and motives are perfectly open before Him, however we might conceal them from men or even from ourselves. See *ii.* 216. n.

276. Spending in the cause of God is called metaphorically "a beautiful loan". It is excellent in many ways: (1) it shows a beautiful spirit of self denial; (2) in other loans there may be a doubt as to the safety of your capital or any return thereon: here you give to the Lord of All, in Whose hands are the keys of want or plenty; giving, you may have manifold blessings, and withholding, you may even lose what you have. If we remember that our goal is God, can we turn away from His cause?

277. The next generation after Moses and Aaron was ruled by Joshua, who crossed the Jordan and settled the tribes in Palestine. His rule lasted for 25 years, after which there was a period of 320 years when the Israelites had a chequered history. They were not united among themselves, and suffered many reversals at the hands of the Midianites, Amalekites, and other tribes of Palestine. They frequently lapsed into idolatry and deserted the worship of the true God. From time to time a leader appeared among them who assumed dictatorial powers. Acting under a sort of theocratic commission from God, he pointed out their backslidings, re-united them under His banner, and restored, from time to time and place to place, the power of Israel. These dictators are called Judges in the English translation of the Old Testament. The last of their line was Samuel, who marks the transition towards the line of Kings on the one hand and of the later Prophets on the other. He may be dated approximately about the 11th century B.C.

They said to a Prophet ²⁷⁸
 (That was) among them:
 "Appoint for us a King
 To fight in the cause of God."
 He said: "Is it not possible ²⁷⁹
 That ye may be commanded
 To fight, and that ye
 Will not fight?" They said:
 "How could we refuse
 To fight in the cause of God,
 Seeing that we were turned out
 Of our homes and our families?"
 But when they were commanded
 To fight, they turned back,
 Except a small band
 Among them. But God
 Has full knowledge of those
 Who do wrong.

247. Their Prophet said to them:
 "God hath appointed
 Talut ²⁸⁰ as king over you."
 They said: "How can he
 Exercise authority over us
 When we are better fitted
 Than he to exercise authority,
 And he is not even gifted,
 With wealth in abundance?"
 He said: "God hath
 Chosen him above you,
 And hath gifted him
 Abundantly with knowledge
 And bodily prowess: God

إِذْ قَالُوا لَنَبِيِّ
 لَهُمْ اَبْعَثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا نَقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ
 اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ اَنْ تَكُونَ
 الْقِتَالُ الْاَنْتَاطِلُوا
 قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا اَلَّا نَقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
 وَقَدْ اُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَاهْنَاؤُنَا
 فَلَمَّا كَتَبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ
 تَوَلَّوْا اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا مِنْهُمْ
 وَاللَّهُ عَلِيْمٌ بِالظَّالِمِيْنَ ٥

۲۴۷- وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ
 اِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا
 قَالُوا اَنَّى يَكُوْنُ لَهُ الْمَلَكُ عَلَيْنَا
 وَهُنَّ اَسْفَى بِالْمَلَكِ مِنْهُ
 وَكَرِهُوْنَ سَعَةَ قَرْنِ الْمَالِ
 قَالَ اِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ
 وَرَدَّاهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْوَلَدِ وَالْجَسْمِ

278. This was Samuel. In his time Israel had suffered from much corruption within and many reverses without. The Philistines had made a great attack and defeated Israel with great slaughter. The Israelites, instead of relying on Faith and their own valour and cohesion, brought out their most sacred possession, the Ark of the Covenant, to help them in the fight. But the enemy captured it, carried it away, and retained it for seven months. The Israelites forgot that wickedness cannot screen itself behind a sacred relic. Nor can a sacred relic help the enemies of faith. The enemy found that the Ark brought nothing but misfortune for themselves, and were glad to abandon it. It apparently remained twenty years in the village (*qarya*) of Ya'arim (Kirjath-jearim): I. Samuel, vii. 2. Meanwhile the people pressed Samuel to appoint them a king. They thought that a king would cure all their ills, whereas what was wanting was a spirit of union and discipline and a readiness on their part to fight in the cause of God.

279. Samuel knew as a Prophet that the people were fickle and only wanted to cover their own want of union and true spirit by asking for a king. They replied with spirit in words, but when it came to action, they failed. They hid themselves in caves and rocks, or ran away, and even those who followed him trembling": I. Samuel, xiii. 6-7.

280. Talut is the Arabic name for Saul, who was tall and handsome, but belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe in Israel. His worldly belongings were slender, and it was when he went out to search for some asses which had been lost from his father's house that he met Samuel and was anointed king by him. The people's fickleness appeared immediately he was named. They raised all sorts of petty objections to him. The chief consideration in their minds was selfishness: each one wanted to be leader and king himself, instead of desiring sincerely the good of the people as a whole, as a leader should do.

Granteth His power to whom
He pleaseth. God careth
For all, and He knoweth
All things."

248. And (further) their Prophet
Said to them : "A Sign
Of his authority
Is that there shall come
To you the Ark of the Covenant,²⁸¹
With (an assurance) therein
Of security²⁸² from your Lord,
And the relics left
By the family of Moses
And the family of Aaron,
Carried by angels.²⁸³
In this is a Symbol
For you if ye indeed
Have faith."

SECTION 33.

249. ~~When~~ Talūt set forth
With the armies, he said : ²⁸⁴
"God will test you
At the stream : if any
Drinks of its water,
He goes not with my army :
Only those who taste not
Of it go with me :
A mere sip out of the hand
Is excused." But they all
Drank of it, except a few.
When they crossed the river,—
He and the faithful ones with him,—
They said : "This day ²⁸⁵
We cannot cope
With Goliath and his forces."

وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلِكًا مِّنْ يَّشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝

۲۴۸- وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ
إِنَّ آيَةَ مَلِكَةٍ
أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ
مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ
وَالْهَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُم
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ۝

۲۴۹- فَلَمَّا نَفَضَ طَأْلُوتُ بِأَجْمَعِهِ
قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ
فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي
وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي
إِلَّا مَنِ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ
فَفَرَّقَ اللَّهُ أُولَئِكَ إِذْ وَقَعَتِ الْوَادِيَّةُ
فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ
هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ
قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِغَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ

281. *Ark of the Covenant*: *Tābūt*; a chest of acacia wood covered and lined with pure gold, about 5 ft. × 3 ft. × 3 ft. See Exod. xxv. 10-22. It was to contain the "testimony of God", or the Ten Commandments engraved on stone, with relics of Moses and Aaron. Its gold lid was to be the "Mercy Seat", with two cherubims of beaten gold, with wings outstretched. This was a sacred possession to Israel. It was lost to the enemy in the early part of Samuel's ministry: see second note to ii. 246: when it came back, it remained in a village for twenty years, and was apparently taken to the capital when kingship was instituted. It thus became a symbol of unity and authority.

282. *Security*: *sukīna*=safety, tranquility, peace. Later Jewish writings use the same word for a symbol of God's Glory in the Tabernacle or tent in which the Ark was kept, or in the Temple when it was built by Solomon.

283. *Carried by angels*: these words refer to the *Tābūt* or Ark: the cherubims with outstretched wings on the lid may well be supposed to carry the security or peace which the Ark symbolised.

284. A Commander is hampered by a large force if it is not in perfect discipline and does not whole-heartedly believe in its Commander. He must get rid of all the doubtful ones, as did Gideon before Saul, and Henry V in Shakespeare's story long afterwards. Saul used the same test as Gideon: he gave a certain order when crossing a stream: the greater part disobeyed, and were sent back. Gideon's story will be found in Judges, vii. 2-7.

285. Even in the small band that remained faithful, there were some who were appalled by the number of the enemy when they met him face to face, and saw the size and strength of the enemy Commander, the giant Goliath (*Jālūt*). But there was a very small band who were determined to face all odds because they had perfect confidence in God and in the cause for which they were fighting. They were for making a firm stand and seeking God's help. Of that number was David: see next note.

But those who were convinced
That they must meet God,
Said: "How oft, by God's will,
Hath a small force
Vanquished a big one?
God is with those
Who steadfastly persevere."

250. When they advanced
To meet Goliath and his forces,
They prayed: "Our Lord!
Pour out constancy on us
And make our steps firm:
Help us against those
That reject faith."

251. By God's will,
They routed them;
And David ²⁸⁶ slew Goliath;
And God gave him
Power and wisdom
And taught him
Whatever (else) He willed. ²⁸⁷
And did not God
Check one set of people
By means of another,
The earth would indeed
Be full of mischief:
But God is full of bounty
To all the worlds. ²⁸⁸

252. These are the Signs
Of God: we rehearse them
² To thee in truth: verily
³⁰ Thou art one of the Apostles.

قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ أَكْثَرُ مُلْكًا اللَّهُ
كَمْ مِنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ
هَلَكَتْ فِئَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ○

٢٥٠- وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ
قَالُوا رَبَّنَا آفِرْغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا
وَقَيِّمْتَ أَقْدَامَنَا
وَاغْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ○

٢٥١- فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ
وَأَنَّهُ اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ
وَالْحِكْمَةُ وَعَلَّمَهُ مَتَاعًا
وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ
لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ○

٢٥٢- تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهَا بِالْحَقِّ
وَأَنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ○

286. Note how the whole story is compressed into a few words as regards narration, but its spiritual lessons are dwelt upon from many points of view. The Old Testament is mainly interested in the narrative, which is full of d-tail, but says little about the universal truths of which every true story is a parable. The Qur'an assumes the story, but tells the parable.

David was a raw youth, with no arms or armour. He was not known even in the Israelite camp, and the giant Goliath mocked him. Even David's own elder brother chid him for deserting his sheep, for he was a poor shepherd lad to outward appearance, but his faith had made him more than a match for the Philistine hosts. When Saul offered his own armour and arms to David, the young hero declined, as he had not tried them, while his shepherd's sling and staff were his well tried implements. He picked up five smooth pebbles on the spot from the stream, and used his sling to such effect that he knocked down Goliath. He then used Goliath's own sword to slay him. There was consternation in the Philistine army: they broke and fled, and were pursued and cut to pieces.

Apart from the main lesson that if we would preserve our national existence and our faith it is our duty to fight with courage and firmness, there are other lessons in David's story: (1) numbers do not count, but faith, determination, and the blessing of God: (2) size and strength are of no avail against truth, courage, and careful planning: (3) the hero tries his own weapons, and those that are available to him at the time and place, even though people may laugh at him: (4) if God is with us, the enemy's weapon may become an instrument of his own destruction: (5) personality conquers all dangers, and puts heart into our own wavering friends: (6) pure faith brings God's reward, which may take many forms; in David's case it was Power, Wisdom, and other gifts; see next note.

287. David was not only a shepherd, a warrior, a king, a wise man, and a prophet, but was also endowed with the gifts of poetry and music. His Psalms (*zabūr*) are still extant.

288. God's plan is universal. He loves and protects all His creatures and His bounties are for all worlds (i. 2. n.). To protect one He may have to check another, but we must never lose faith that His love is for all in boundless measure.

253. **Those apostles**

We endowed with gifts,
 Some above others : ²⁸⁹
 To one of them God spoke ; ²⁹⁰
 Others He raised
 To degrees (of honour) ; ²⁹¹
 To Jesus the son of Mary
 We gave Clear (Signs), ²⁹²
 And strengthened him
 With the holy spirit.
 If God had so willed,
 Succeeding generations
 Would not have fought
 Among each other, after
 Clear (Signs) had come to them,
 But they (chose) to wrangle,
 Some believing and others
 Rejecting. If God had so willed,
 They would not have fought
 Each other ; but God
 Fulfilleth His plan. ²⁹³

٢٥٣- تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ
 فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ
 كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ
 وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ
 وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
 مَا اقْتَتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
 مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَكِنْ
 اخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ آمَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ
 كَفَرَ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلُوا
 وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ۝

الْبَيِّنَاتِ
 لِقَاءِ اللَّهِ

ق

C. 52 — Who can describe the nature of God ?

(ii 254-283.) The Living, the Eternal : His Throne
 Extends over worlds and worlds
 That no imagination can compass.
 His truth is clear as daylight : how
 Can compulsion advance Religion ?
 The keys of Life and Death, and the mysteries
 Of everything around us, are in His hands.
 Our duty then is to seek the path
 Of goodness, kindness, upright
 Conduct and Charity,—to grasp

289. Different gifts and different modes of procedure are prescribed to God's Apostles in different ages, and perhaps their degrees are different though it is not for us mortals, with our imperfect knowledge, to make any difference between one and another of God's Apostles (ii. 136). As this winds up the argument about fighting, three illustrations are given from the past, how it affected God's Messengers. To Moses God spoke in clouds of glory : he led his men for forty years through the wilderness, mainly fighting against the unbelief of his own people ; he organised them to fight with the sword for Palestine, but was raised to God's mercy before his enterprise ripened, and it fell to Joshua to carry out his plan. David, though a mere shepherd boy, was chosen by God. He overthrew the greatest warrior of his time, became a king, and waged successful wars, being also a prophet, a poet, and a musician. Jesus was "strengthened with the holy spirit" : he was given no weapons to fight, and his mission was of a more limited character. In Muhammad's mission these and other characters were combined. Gentler than Jesus, he organised on a vaster scale than Moses, and from Medina he ruled and gave laws, and the Qur'an has a vaster scope than the Psalms of David.

290. Moses : see note above.

291. There is a two-fold sense : they were raised to high posts of honour, and they rose by degrees. I take the reference to be to David.

292. Cf. ii. 87.

293. If some power of choice was to be given to man, his selfishness inevitably caused divisions. It must not be supposed that it frustrates God's Plan. He carries it out as He will.

At no advantage from a brother's need,
To stand by the word that is pledged,
To bear true witness, and remove all cause
Of misunderstandings in our dealings
As between man and man.

SECTION 34.

254. **Oh** ye who believe!
Spend out of (the bounties)²⁹⁴
We have provided for you,
Before the Day comes
When no bargaining
(Will avail), no friendship
Nor intercession.²⁹⁵
Those who reject Faith
Injure (only themselves).

255. **God!** There is no god
But He,—the Living,
The Self-Subsisting, Eternal.²⁹⁶
No slumber can seize Him
Nor sleep. His are all things
In the heavens and on earth.
Who is there can intercede
In His presence except
As He permitteth? He knoweth
What (appeareth to His creatures

۲۵۴-يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
انْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ
مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ
وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفَاعَةٌ
وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ○

۲۵۵-اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ
لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ
لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ
ذَٰلِكَ الَّذِي يُشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ

294. *Spend*, i.e., give away in charity, or employ in good works, but do not hoard. Good works would in Islam include everything that advances the good of one that is in need whether a neighbour or a stranger, or that advances the good of the community, or even the good of the person himself to whom God has given the bounty. But it must be real good and there should be no admixture of baser motives, such as vainglory, or false indulgence, or encouragement of idleness, or playing off one person against another. The bounties include mental and spiritual gifts as well as wealth and material gifts.

295. Cf. ii. 123 and ii. 48.

296. This is the *Ayat-ul-Kursi*, the "Verse of the Throne". Who can translate its glorious meaning, or reproduce the rhythm of its well-chosen and comprehensive words? Even in the original Arabic the meaning seems to be greater than can be expressed in words.

The attributes of God are so different from anything we know in our present world that we have to be content with understanding that the only fit word by which we can name Him is "He,"—the pronoun standing for His name. His name—God or Allāh—is sometimes misused and applied to other beings or things; and we must emphatically repudiate any idea or suggestion that there can be any compeer of God, the one true living God. He lives, but His life is self-subsisting and eternal: it does not depend upon other beings and is not limited to time and space. Perhaps the attribute of *Qayyūm* includes not only the idea of "Self-subsisting" but also the idea of "Keeping up and maintaining all life," His life being the source and constant support of all derived forms of life. Perfect life is perfect activity, in contrast to the imperfect life which we see around us, which is not only subject to death but to the need for rest or slowed down activity, (something which is between activity and sleep, for which I in common with other translators have used the word "slumber") and the need for full sleep itself. But God has no need for rest or sleep. His activity like His life, is perfect and self-subsisting. Contrast with this the expression used in Psalms lxxviii. 65 "Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine."

As) Before or After or Behind.²⁹⁷
 Nor shall they compass
 Aught of His knowledge
 Except as He willeth.
 His Throne doth extend²⁹⁸
 Over the heavens
 And the earth, and He feeleth
 No fatigue in guarding
 And preserving them.²⁹⁹
 For He is the Most High,
 The Supreme (in glory).

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ
 وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ
 إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ
 وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
 وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا
 وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

256. Let there be no compulsion³⁰⁰
 In religion : Truth stands out
 Clear from Error : whoever
 Rejects Evil and believes
 In God hath grasped
 The most trustworthy
 Hand-hold, that never breaks.³⁰¹
 And God heareth
 And knoweth all things.

۲۵۶- لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ
 قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ
 فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمَرْ بِاللَّهِ
 فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْقِصَامَ
 لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

257. God is the Protector
 Of those who have faith :

۲۵۷- اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

297. After we realise that His Life is absolute Life, His Being is absolute Being, while others are contingent and evanescent, our ideas of heaven and earth vanish like shadows. What is behind that shadow is He. Such reality as our heavens and our earth possess is a reflection of His absolute Reality. The pantheist places the wrong accent when he says that everything is He. The truth is better expressed when we say that everything is His. How then can any creatures stand before Him as of right, and claim to intercede for a fellow-creature? In the first place, both are His, and He cares as much for one as for the other. In the second place, they are both dependent on His will and command. But He in His Wisdom and Plan may grade his creatures and give one superiority over another. Then by His will and permission such a one may intercede or help according to the laws and duties laid on him. God's knowledge is absolute, and is not conditioned by Time or Space. To us, His creatures, these conditions always apply. His knowledge and our knowledge are therefore in different categories, and our knowledge only gets some reflection of Reality when it accords with His Will and Plan.

298. *Throne*: seat, power, knowledge, symbol of authority. In our thoughts we exhaust everything when we say "the heavens and the earth". Well, then, in everything is the working of God's power, and will, and authority. Everything of course includes spiritual things as well as things of sense. Cf Wordsworth's fine outburst in "Tintern Abbey". "Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, And the round ocean and the living air, And in the blue sky, and in the mind of man: A motion and a spirit that impels all thinking things, all objects of all thought, And rolls through all things."

299. A life of activity that is imperfect or relative would not only need rest for carrying on its own activities, but would be in need of double rest when it has to look after and guard, or cherish, or help our activities. In contrast with this is the Absolute Life, which is free from any such need or contingency. For it is supreme above anything that we can conceive.

300. Compulsion is incompatible with religion: because (1) religion depends upon faith and will, and these would be meaningless if induced by force; (2) Truth and Error have been so clearly shown up by the mercy of God that there should be no doubt in the minds of any persons of goodwill as to the fundamentals of faith; (3) God's protection is continuous, and His Plan is always to lead us from the depths of darkness into the clearest light.

301. *Hand-hold*: something which the hands can grasp for safety in a moment of danger. It may be a loop or a handle, or anchor. If it is without flaw, so that there is no danger of breaking, our safety is absolutely assured so long as we hold fast to it. Our safety then depends on our own will and faith: God's help and protection will always be unailing if we hold firmly to God and trust in Him.

From the depths of darkness
He will lead them forth
Into light. Of those
Who reject faith the patrons
Are the Evil Ones : from light
They will lead them forth
Into the depths of darkness.
They will be Companions
Of the fire, to dwell therein
(For ever).

SECTION 35.

258. **كَيْفَ** art thou not
Turned thy vision to one
Who disputed with Abraham ³⁰²
About his Lord, because
God had granted him
Power? Abraham said :
"My Lord is He Who
Giveth life and death."
He said: "I give life and death."
Said Abraham: "It is God
That causeth the sun
To rise from the East :
Do thou then cause him
To rise from the West."
Thus was he confounded
Who (in arrogance) rejected
Faith. Nor doth God
Give guidance
To a people unjust. ³⁰³

259. Or (take) the similitude
Of one who passed

يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ
يُخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ
أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

٢٥٨- اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِى حَاجَّ اِبْرٰهٖمَ فِى
رَبِّهٖ اَنْ اَتٰهُ اَللّٰهُ الْمَلِكُ
اِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهٖمُ رَبِّى الَّذِى يُحٰى وَيُمِيتُ
قَالَ اَنَا اُنْحٰى وَاُمِيتُ
قَالَ اِبْرٰهٖمُ فَاَنّٰ اَللّٰهُ
يَاۤتِى بِالسُّنَنِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ
فَاَتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ
فَبُهِتَ الَّذِى كَفَرَ
وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِيْنَ ۝

٢٥٩- اَوْ كَالَّذِى مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْبَةٍ

302. The three verses 258-260 have been the subject of much controversy as to the exact meaning to be attached to the incidents and the precise persons alluded to, whose names are not mentioned. M. M. A's learned notes give some indication of the points at issue. In such matters, where the Qurān has given no names and the Holy Apostle has himself given no indication, it seems to me useless to speculate, and still worse to put forward positive opinions. In questions of learning speculations are often interesting. But it seems to me that the meaning of the Qurān is so wide and universal that we are in danger of missing the real and eternal meaning if we go on disputing about minor points. All three incidents are such as may happen again and again in any prophet's life-time, and be seen in impersonal vision at any time. Here they are connected with Muṣṭafā's vision as shown by the opening words of verse 258.

303. The first point illustrated is the pride of power, and the impotence of human power as against God's power. The person who disputed with Abraham may have been Nimrod or some ruler in Babylonia, or indeed elsewhere. I name Babylonia as it was the original home of Abraham (Ur of the Chaldees), and Babylon prided herself on her arts and sciences in the ancient world. Science can do many wonderful things; it could then; it can now. But the mystery of Life baffled science then, as it continues to baffle science now, after many centuries of progress. Abraham had faith, and referred back everything to the true Cause of Causes. A sceptical ruler might jestingly say: "I have the power of life and death." A man of science might say: "We have investigated the laws of life and death." Different kinds of powers lie in the hands of kings and men of knowledge. The claim in both cases is true in a very limited sense. But Abraham confounded the claimer by going back to fundamentals. "If you had the ultimate power, why could you not make the sun rise from the West?"

By a hamlet, all in ruins³⁰⁴
 To its roofs. He said:
 "Oh! how shall God
 Bring it (ever) to life,
 After (this) its death?"
 But God caused him
 To die for a hundred years;
 Then raised him up (again).
 He said: "How long
 Didst thou tarry (thus)?"
 He said: "(Perhaps) a day
 Or part of a day." He said:
 "Nay, thou hast tarried
 Thus a hundred years;
 But look at thy food
 And thy drink; they show
 No signs of age; and look
 At thy donkey; and that
 We may make of thee
 A Sign unto the people,
 Look further at the bones,
 How We bring them together
 And clothe them with flesh."³⁰⁵
 When this was shown clearly
 To him, he said: "I know
 That God hath power
 Over all things."

260. Behold! Abraham said:]
 "My Lord! Show me how
 Thou givest life to the dead."³⁰⁶
 He said: "Dost not thou
 Then believe?" He said:
 "Yea! but to satisfy

وَمِنْ خَاوِيَةٍ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا
 قَالَ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا إِلَهُي بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا
 فَأَمَّا تِلْكَ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ تَمُوتُ
 قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضُ يَوْمٍ
 قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ
 فَانْظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ
 وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ
 وَانْظُرْ إِلَى حِمْلِكَ
 وَلَيَجْعَلَنَّ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ
 وَانْظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنْشِئُهَا
 ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا
 فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

٢٦٠- وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ
 تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذَا
 قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنَّ لَيْسَ بِكَ عَلَىٰ

304. This incident is referred variously (1) to Ezekiel's vision of dry bones (Ezekiel, xxxvii. 1-10); (2) to Nehemiah's visit to Jerusalem in ruins after the Captivity, and to its re-building (Nehemiah, i. 12-20); and (3) to 'Uzair, or Ezra, or Esdras, the scribe, priest, and reformer, who was sent by the Persian King after the Captivity to Jerusalem, and about whom there are many Jewish legends. As to (1), there are only four words in this verse about bones. As to (2) and (3), there is nothing specific to connect this verse with either. The wording is perfectly general, and we must understand it as general. I think it does refer not only to individual, but to national, death and resurrection.

305. A man is in despair when he sees the destruction of a whole people, city, or civilisation. But God can cause resurrection, as He has done many times in history, and as He will do at the final Resurrection. Time is nothing before God. The doubter thinks that he has been dead or "tarried thus" a day or less when the period has been a century. On the other hand, the food and drink which he left behind is intact, and as fresh as it was when he left it. But the donkey is not only dead, but nothing but bones is left of it. And before the man's eyes, the bones are reunited, clothed with flesh and blood, and restored to life. Moral: (1) Time is nothing to God; (2) It affects different things in different ways; (3) The keys of life and death are in God's hands; (4) Man's power is nothing; his faith should be in God.

306. Verse 258, we saw, illustrated God's power over Life and Death, contrasted with man's vain boasts or imaginings. Verse 259 illustrated how Time is immaterial to God's working: things, individuals and nations are subject to laws of life and death, which are under God's complete control, however much we may be misled by appearances. Now in Verse 260 we are shown the power of wisdom and love: if man can tame birds so that they know him and fly to him, how much more will God's creatures obey His call at the Resurrection?

My own understanding." ³⁰⁷
 He said: "Take four birds;
 Tame them to turn to thee;
 Put a portion ³⁰⁸ of them
 On every hill, and call to them:
 They will come to thee
 (Flying) with speed.
 Then know that God
 Is Exalted, Wise."

SECTION 36.

261. The parable of those
 Who spend their substance
 In the way of God is that
 Of a grain of corn: it groweth
 Seven ears, and each ear
 Hath a hundred grains.
 God giveth manifold increase
 To whom He pleaseth:
 For God careth for all
 And He knoweth all things.

262. Those who spend
 Their substance in the cause
 Of God, and follow not up
 Their gifts with reminders
 Of their generosity
 Or with injury,—
 Their reward is with their Lord:
 On them shall be no fear,
 Nor shall they grieve.

263. Kind words ³⁰⁹
 And the covering of faults

قَالَ خُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِنَ الطَّيْرِ
 فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ
 ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا
 ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا
 وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

٢٦١- مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
 فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَتَتْ سَبْعَ
 سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سُنبُلَةٍ
 مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
 وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

٢٦٢- الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ
 اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتْبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا
 مَنًّا وَلَا أَذًى
 لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
 وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾
 ٢٦٣- قَوْلٌ مَعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ

307. Abraham had complete faith in God's power, but he wanted, with God's permission, to give an explanation of that faith to his own heart and mind. Where I have translated "satisfy my own understanding," the literal translation would be "satisfy my own heart."

308. A portion of them: *Juz-an*. The received Commentators understand this to mean that the birds were to be cut up and pieces of them were to be put on the hills. The cutting up or killing is not mentioned, but they say that it is implied by an ellipsis, as the question is how God gives life to the dead. Of the modern Muslim Commentators, M. P. is non-committal, but H. G. S. and M. M. A. understand that the birds were not killed, but that a "portion" here means a unit, single birds were placed on hills, and they flew to the one who tamed them. This last view commends itself to me, as the cutting up of the birds to pieces is nowhere mentioned, unless we understand the word for "taming" in an unusual and almost impossible sense.

309. A very high standard is set for charity (1) It must be in the way of God. (2) It must expect no reward in this world. (3) It must not be followed by references or reminders to the act of charity. (4) Still less should any annoyance or injury be caused to the recipient, e.g., by boasting a blind eye to other people's faults or short-comings is the essence of charity: these things are better than charity if charity is spoilt by tricks that do harm. At the same time, while no reward is to be expected, there is abundant reward from God—material, moral, and spiritual—according to His own good pleasure and plan. If we spend in the way of God, it is not as if God was in need of our charity. On the contrary our short-comings are so great that we require His utmost forbearance before any good that we can do can merit His praise or reward. Our motives are so mixed that our best may really be very poor if judged by a very strict standard.

Are better than charity
Followed by injury.
God is Free of all wants,
And He is most Forbearing.

خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتَّبِعُهَا أَذًى
وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ ٥

264. Oh ye who believe !
Cancel not your charity
By reminders of your generosity
Or by injury,—like those
Who spend their substance
To be seen of men,
But believe neither
In God nor in the Last Day.³¹⁰
They are like a hard,
Barren rock, on which
Is a little soil : on it
Falls heavy rain,
Which leaves it
(Just) a bare stone.
They will be able to do nothing
With aught they have earned.
And God guideth not
Those who reject faith.

٢٦٤- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا تَبْطُلُوا صَدَقَتَكُمْ بِالسَّنِ وَالْأَذَى
كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِيقًا تَائِسًا
وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
فَتَكُنْ لَهُ كَنْزٌ صِفْوَانٍ
عَلَيْهِ تَرَابٌ فَاصَابُهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَكُنْهُ صَلْدًا
لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ
مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ٥

265. And the likeness of those
Who spend their substance,
Seeking to please God
And to strengthen their souls,
Is as a garden, high
And fertile : heavy rain³¹¹
But makes it yield
A double increase
Of harvest, and if it receives not
Heavy rain, light moisture
Sufficeth it. God seeth well
Whatever ye do.

٢٦٥- وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَتَثْبِيئًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ
أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَاتَتْ أَكْثُلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ
فَإِن لَّمْ يَجِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ٥

310. False charity, "to be seen of men," is really no charity. It is worse, for it betokens a disbelief in God and the Hereafter. "God seeth well whatever ye do" (ii. 265). It is compared to a hard barren rock on which by chance has fallen a little soil. Good rain, which renders fertile soil more fruitful, washes away the little soil which this rock had, and exposes its nakedness. What good can hypocrites derive even from the little wealth they may have amassed?

311. True charity is like a field with good soil on a high situation. It catches good showers of rain, the moisture penetrates the soil, and yet its elevated situation keeps it well-drained, and healthy favourable conditions increase its output enormously. But supposing even that the rain is not abundant, it catches dew and makes the most of any little moisture it can get, and that is sufficient for it. So a man of true charity is spiritually healthy; he is best situated to attract the bounties of God, which he does not hoard selfishly but circulates freely. In lean times he still produces good works, and is content with what he has. He looks to God's pleasure and the strengthening of his own soul.

266. Does any of you wish
That he should have a garden ³¹²
With date-palms and vines
And streams flowing
Underneath, and all kinds
Of fruit, while he is stricken
With old age, and his children
Are not strong (enough) ³¹³
To look after themselves)—
That it should be caught
In a whirlwind,
With fire therein,
And be burnt up?
Thus doth God make clear
To you His Signs;
That ye may consider.

SECTION 37.

267. Oh ye who believe!
Give of the good things
Which ye have (honourably)
earned, ³¹⁴
And of the fruits of the earth
Which We have produced

٢٦٦- أَيُّودُ أَحَدَكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ
مِنْ تَجْوِيلٍ وَاعْتَابٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
لَهُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
وَاصَابُهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضِعَفَاءُ
فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَاعٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ وَاحْتَرَقَتْ
كَذَلِكَ يَبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ٢٦٧

٢٦٨- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ
وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ

312. The truly spiritual nature of charity having been explained in three parables (vv. 261, 264, 265), a fourth parable is now added, explaining its bearing on the whole of our life. Suppose we had a beautiful garden well-watered and fertile, with delightful views of streams, and a haven of rest for mind and body; suppose old age were creeping in on us, and our children were either too young to look after themselves or too feeble in health; how should we feel if a sudden whirlwind came with lightning or fire in its train, and burnt it up, thus blasting the whole of our hopes for the present and for the future, and destroying the result of all our labour and savings in the past? Well, this life of ours is a probation. We may work hard, we may save, we may have good luck. We may make ourselves a goodly pleasure, and have ample means of support for ourselves and our children. A great whirlwind charged with lightning and fire comes and burns up the whole show. We are too old to begin again: our children are too young or feeble to help us to repair the mischief. Our chance is lost, because we did not provide against such a contingency. The whirlwind is the "wrath to come": the provision against it is a life of true charity and righteousness, which is the only source of true and lasting happiness in this world and the next. Without it we are subject to all the vicissitudes of this uncertain life. We may even spoil our so-called "charity" by insisting on the obligation which others owe to us or by doing some harm, because our motives are not pure.

313. *Not strong (enough):* *qhu'afūn*: literally weak, decrepit, infirm, possibly referring to both health and will or character.

314. According to the English proverb "Charity covers a multitude of sins". Such a sentiment is strongly disapproved in Islam. Charity has value only if (1) something good and valuable is given, (2) which has been honourably earned or acquired by the giver, or (3) which is produced in nature and can be referred to as a bounty of God. (1) may include such things as are of use and value to others though they may be of less use to us or superfluous to us on account of our having acquired something more suitable for our station in life; for example, discarded clothes, or an old horse or a used motor car; but if the horse is vicious, or the car engine so far gone that it is dangerous to use, then the gift is worse than useless; it is positively harmful, and the giver is a wrong-doer. (2) applies to fraudulent company-promoters, who earn great credit by giving away in charity some of their ill-gotten gains, or to robbers (even if they call themselves by high-sounding names) who "rob Peter to pay Paul". Islam will have nothing to do with tainted property. Its economic code requires that every gain should be honest and honourable. Even "charity" would not cover or destroy the taint. (3) lays down a test in cases of a doubtful gain. Can we refer to it as a gift of God? Obviously the produce of honest labour or agriculture can be so referred to. In modern commerce and speculation there is much of quite the contrary character, and charity will not cover the taint. Some kind of art, skill, or talent are God-given: it is the highest kind of charity to teach them or share their product. Others are the contrary: they are had or tainted. In the same way some professions or services may be tainted, if these tend to moral harm.

For you, and do not even aim³¹⁵
At getting anything
Which is bad, in order that
Out of it ye may give away
Something, when ye yourselves
Would not receive it
Except with closed eyes,³¹⁶
And know that God
Is Free of all wants,
And Worthy of all praise.³¹⁷

وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا النّٰجِيْنَ
مِنْهُ لِيُنْفِقُوْنَ
وَلَسْتُمْ بِأَعْيُنِهِ
إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيْهِ
وَاعْلَمُوْا أَنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفِيْرٌ حَمِيْدٌ ۝

268. The Evil One threatens
You with poverty
And bids you to conduct
Unseemly. God promiseth
You His forgiveness
And bounties,³¹⁸
And God careth for all
And He knoweth all things.

٢٦٨- الشَّيْطٰنُ يَعْزِزُ لَكَ الْفَقْرَ
وَيَأْمُرُكَ بِالْغِيَاثِ
وَاللّٰهُ يَعْزِزُكَ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا
وَاللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ۝

269. He granteth wisdom
To whom He pleaseth ;
And he to whom wisdom
Is granted receiveth
Indeed a benefit overflowing ;
But none will grasp the Message
But men of understanding.

٢٦٩- يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَّشَاءُ
وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ
فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيْرًا
وَمَا يَكْذُرُ إِلَّا أَهْلَ الْاَلْبَابِ ۝

270. And whatever ye spend
In charity or devotion,
Be sure God knows it all.
But the wrong-doers
Have no helpers.

٢٧٠- وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
أَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ مِنْ نَذْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُهُ
وَمَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ۝

315. The preceding note tries to indicate some of the things which are bad or tainted. We should not even think of acquiring them for ourselves, soothing our conscience by the salve that we shall practise charity out of them.

316. Closed eyes imply disgust or connivance because of some feature which we would not openly acknowledge.

317. To dedicate tainted things to God is a dishonour to God, Who is independent of all wants, and Who is worthy of all honour and praise.

318. Good and evil draw us opposite ways and by opposite motives, and the contrast is well marked out in charity. When we think of doing some real act of kindness or charity, we are assailed with doubts and fear of impoverishment; but Evil supports any tendency to selfishness, greed, or even to extravagant expenditure for show, or self-indulgence, or unseemly appetites. On the other hand, God draws us on to all that is kind and good, for that way lies the forgiveness of our sins, and greater real prosperity and satisfaction. No kind or generous act ever ruined any one. It is false generosity that is sometimes shown as leading to ruin. As God knows all our motives and cares for all, and has everything in His power, it is obvious which course a wise man will choose. But wisdom is rare, and it is only wisdom that can appreciate true well-being and distinguish it from the false appearance of well-being.

271. If ye disclose (acts³¹⁹)

Of charity, even so
It is well,
But if ye conceal them,
And make them reach
Those (really) in need,
That is best for you:
It will remove from you
Some of your (stains
Of) evil. And God
Is well acquainted
With what ye do.

٢٧١- إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ
فَوَيْحًا مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا
وَتُؤْتُوهُمُ الْفُقَرَاءَ
فَلَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
وَلِيُخَفِّرَ عَنْكُم مِّنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ۝

272. It is not required

Of thee (Oh Apostle),
To set them on the right path,³²⁰
But God sets on the right path
Whom He pleaseth.
Whatever of good ye give
Benefits your own souls,
And ye shall only do so
Seeking the glory³²¹
Of God. Whatever good
Ye give, shall be
Rendered back to you,
And ye shall not
Be dealt with unjustly.

٢٧٢- لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هَذَا بُحْتٌ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ
وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَا تُنْفِسْكُمْ
وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ
إِلَّا أَنْتُمْ وَأَجْرُ اللَّهِ
وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
يُؤْتِ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ۝

273. (Charity is) for those

In need, who, in God's cause³²²
Are restricted (from travel),
And cannot move about

٢٧٣- لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ
أُخْصِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ

319. It is better to seek no publicity in charity. But if it is known there is no harm. If it is for public purposes, it must necessarily be known, and a pedantic show of concealment may itself be a fault. The harm of publicity lies in motives of ostentation. We can better reach the really deserving poor by quietly seeking for them. The spiritual benefit enures to our own souls, provided our motives are pure, and we are really seeking the good pleasure of God.

320. In connection with charity this means that we must relieve those really in need, whether they are good or bad, on the right path or not, Muslims or otherwise. It is not for us to judge in these matters. God will give light according to His wisdom. Incidentally it adds a further meaning to the command, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (ii. 256). For compulsion may not only be by force, but by economic necessity. In matters of religion we must not even compel by a bribe of charity. The chief motive in charity should be God's pleasure and our own spiritual good. This was addressed in the first instance to Muṣṭafā in Medina, but it is of universal application.

321. See note to ii. 112. *Wajh* means literally : face, countenance ; hence, favour, or glory.

322. Indiscriminate acts of so-called charity are condemned as they may do more harm than good (see v. 262). The real beneficiaries of charity are here indicated. They must be in want. And the want must be due to some honourable cause. For example, they may be doing some unpaid service, such as teaching, or acquiring knowledge or skill, or be in exile for their faith, or in other ways be prevented from seeking employment or doing strenuous work. "God's cause" must not be narrowly interpreted. All sincere and real service to humanity comes within the definition, as well as actual devotion to religion or to the righteous Imām. Such men do not beg from door to door. It is the duty of those who are well-to-do, or of the Public Purse, to find them out.

In the land, seeking
For trade or work :
The ignorant man thinks,
Because of their modesty,
That they are free from want.
Thou shalt know them
By their (unfailing) mark :
They beg not importunately
From all and sundry.
And whatever of good
Ye give, be assured
God knoweth it well.

ضَرَبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ
يَحْسِبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَعْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَنُّفِ
تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ
لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِحْفَافًا
وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
يَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ بِهِ عَسِيرٌ ۝

SECTION 38.

274. **Those who (in charity)** ³²³
Spend of their goods
By night and by day,
In secret and in public,
Have their reward
With their Lord :
On them shall be no fear,
Nor shall they grieve.

الرَّحِيمِ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ
وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً
فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ۝

275. **Those who devour usury** ³²⁴
Will not stand except
As stands one whom
The Evil One by his touch
Hath driven to madness. ³²⁵
That is because they say :
" Trade is like usury," ³²⁶
But God hath permitted trade

الرَّحِيمِ يَا كُفُوفَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ
إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَخْتَبِطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ
مِنَ الْمَسِّ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ
مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ

323. We recapitulate the beauty of charity (i.e., unselfish giving of one's self or one's goods) before we come to its opposite, i.e., the selfish grasping greed of usury against those in need or distress. Charity instead of impoverishing you will enrich you : you will have more happiness and less fear. Contrast it with what follows,—the degradation of the grasping usurer.

324. Usury is condemned and prohibited in the strongest possible terms. There can be no question about the prohibition. When we come to the definition of Usury there is room for difference of opinion. *Ḥaḍhrat 'Umar*, according to *Ibn Kathir*, felt some difficulty in the matter, as the Apostle left this world before the details of the question were settled. This was one of the three questions on which he wished he had had more light from the Apostle, the other two being *Khilāfat* and *Kalālat* (see iv. 12 n. 518). Our 'Ulama, ancient and modern, have worked out a great body of literature on Usury, based mainly on economic conditions as they existed at the rise of Islam. I agree with them on the main principles, but respectfully differ from them on the definition of Usury. As this subject is highly controversial, I shall discuss it, not in this Commentary but on a suitable occasion elsewhere. The definition I would accept would be : undue profit made, not in the way of legitimate trade, out of loans of gold and silver, and necessary articles of food, such as wheat, barley, dates, and salt (according to the list mentioned by the Holy Apostle himself). My definition would include profiteering of all kinds, but exclude economic credit, the creature of modern banking and finance.

325. An apt simile : whereas legitimate trade or industry increases the prosperity and stability of men and nations, a dependence on Usury would merely encourage a race of idlers, cruel blood-suckers, and worthless fellows who do not know their own good and are therefore akin to madmen.

326. The sharp opposition between legitimate trade and usury supports my definition in the last note but one. *Bai'* (literary, Sale or Barter) is also used more generally for trade and commerce, and various kinds of transactions.

And forbidden usury.
Those who after receiving
Direction from their Lord,
Desist, shall be pardoned
For the past; their case
Is for God (to judge);
But those who repeat
(The offence) are Companions
Of the Fire: they will
Abide therein (for ever).

276. God will deprive
Usury of all blessing,
But will give increase
For deeds of charity:
For He loveth not
Creatures ungrateful
And wicked.

277. Those who believe,
And do deeds of righteousness,
And establish regular prayers
And regular charity,
Will have their reward
With their Lord:
On them shall be no fear,
Nor shall they grieve.³²⁷

278. O ye who believe!
Fear God, and give up
What remains of your demand
For usury, if ye are
Indeed believers.

279. If ye do it not,
Take notice of war³²⁸
From God and His Apostle:
But if ye turn back,
Ye shall have
Your capital sums:
Deal not unjustly,
And ye shall not
Be dealt with unjustly.

الزُّبُوۡا۟ فَسَنۡ جَآءُكَ مَوۡعِظَةٌ مِّنۡ رَبِّكَ
فَاٰتِ بِهَا قَلۡلًا مَّا سَلَفَ
وَاٰمُرُوكَ اِلَى اللّٰهِ
وَمِنۡ عَادٍ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ اَصۡحٰبُ النَّارِ
هُمۡ فِيۡهَا خٰلِدُوۡنَ ۝

٢٧٦- يَمۡسُقُ اللّٰهُ الزُّبُوۡا
وَيُرِيۡكَ الصَّدَقٰتِ
وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَجۡبُ
كُلَّ كَفَّٰرٍ اَشِيۡمٍ ۝

٢٧٧- اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَآتَوۡا الزَّكٰوةَ
لَهُمۡ اَجۡرُهُمۡ عِنۡدَ رَبِّهِمۡ
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمۡ وَلَا هُمۡ يَحۡزَنُوۡنَ ۝

٢٧٨- يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ
وَذَرُوۡا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الزَّكٰوةِ
اِنَّ كُنۡتُمۡ مُّؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ۝

٢٧٩- فَاِنْ لَّمۡ تَفۡعَلُوۡا فَاَدۡنُوۡا بِحَرْبٍ
مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوۡلِهِؕ وَاِنْ تُبۡتِغُوۡا
فَلِكُمۡ رُءُوسُ اَمۡوَالِكُمۡ
لَا تَظۡلُمُوۡنَ وَلَا تَظَلَمُوۡنَ ۝

327. The contrast between charity and unlawful grasping of wealth began at v. 274, where this phrase occurs as a theme. Here the theme finishes with the same phrase. The following four verses refer to further concessions on behalf of debtors, as creditors are asked to (a) give up even claims arising out of the past on account of usury, and (b) to give time for payment of capital if necessary, or (c) to write off the debt altogether as an act of charity.

328. This is not war for opinions, but an ultimatum of war for the liberation of debtors unjustly dealt with and oppressed.

280. If the debtor is
In a difficulty,
Grant him time
Till it is easy
For him to repay.
But if ye remit it
By way of charity,
That is best for you
If ye only knew.

۲۸۰- وَإِنْ كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ
فَنظِرْهُ إِلَىٰ مِيسْرَةٍ
وَأَنْ تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

281. And fear the Day
When ye shall be
Brought back to God.
Then shall every soul
Be paid what it earned,
And none shall be
Dealt with unjustly.

۲۸۱- وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا
تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَىٰ اللَّهِ ۖ
تُكْفَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ
وَهُمْ لَا يَظْلَمُونَ ۝

SECTION 39.

282. **Q**h ye who believe !
When ye deal with each other,
In transactions involving
Future obligations
In a fixed period of time,
Reduce them to writing.³²⁹
Let a scribe write down
Faithfully as between
The parties : let not the scribe
Refuse to write : as God³³⁰
Has taught him,
So let him write.
Let him who incurs
The liability dictate,
But let him fear
His Lord God,
And not diminish
Aught of what he owes.
If the party liable
Is mentally deficient,

۲۸۲- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
إِذَا تَدَايَنتُمْ بِدِينٍ
إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ
وَلْيَكْتُبْ بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ
وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ
أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ
وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ
وَلْيَمْلِكِ اللَّهُ رُفْقَهُ
وَلَا يَبْخَسْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا
فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا

329. The first part of the verse deals with transactions involving future payment or future consideration, and the second part with transactions in which payment and delivery are made on the spot. Examples of the former are if goods are bought now and payment is promised at a fixed time and place in the future, or if cash is paid now and delivery is contracted for at a fixed time and place in the future. In such cases a written document is recommended, but it is held that the words later on in this verse, that it is "juster.....more suitable as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts," etc., imply that it is not obligatory in law. Examples of the latter kind—cash payment and delivery on the spot—require no evidence in writing, but apparently oral witnesses to such transactions are recommended.

330. The scribe in such matters assumes a fiduciary capacity : he should therefore remember to act as in the presence of God, with full justice to both parties. The art of writing he should look upon as a gift from God, and he should use it as in His service. In an illiterate population the scribe's position is still more responsible.

Or weak, or unable
Himself to dictate,³³¹
Let his guardian
Dictate faithfully.
And get two witnesses,
Out of your own men,³³²
And if there are not two men,
Then a man and two women,
Such as ye choose,
For witnesses,
So that if one of them errs,
The other can remind her.
The witnesses
Should not refuse
When they are called on
(For evidence).
Disdain not to reduce
To writing (your contract)³³³
For a future period,
Whether it be small
Or big: it is juster
In the sight of God,
More suitable as evidence,
And more convenient
To prevent doubts
Among yourselves.
But if it be a transaction
Which ye carry out
On the spot among yourselves,
There is no blame on you
If ye reduce it not
To writing.
But take witnesses
Whenever ye make
A commercial contract;
And let neither scribe
Nor witness suffer harm.
If ye do (such harm),
It would be wickedness
In you. So fear God;
For it is God
That teaches you.
And God is well acquainted
With all things.³³³

أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ
أَنْ يُبَيِّنَ لَهُ قَلِيلًا وَلِيَّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ
وَأَسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ
مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ
فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَيْنِ
مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ
أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا
فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى
وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا
وَلَا تَكْتُبُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوا
صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ
ذَلِكَ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا
إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونُوا تِجَارَةً
حَاصِرَةٌ
تُذَكِّرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ
فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا
وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ
وَلَا يُضَارَ كَاتِبُ وَلَا شَهِيدُهُ
وَأِنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فُسُوقٌ بِكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۝

331. Possibly the person "mentally deficient, or weak, or unable to dictate," may also be incapable of making a valid contract, and the whole duty would be on his guardian, who again must act in perfect good faith, not only protecting but vigilantly promoting the interests of his ward.

332. It is desirable that the men (or women) who are chosen as witness should be from the circle to which the parties belong, as they would best be able to understand the transaction, and be most easily available if their evidence is required in future.

333. Commercial morality is here taught on the highest plane and yet in the most practical manner, both as regards the bargains to be made, the evidence to be provided, the doubts to be avoided, and the duties and rights of scribes and witnesses. Probity even in worldly matters is to be, not a mere matter of convenience or policy, but a matter of conscience and religious duty. Even our every-day transactions are to be carried out as in the presence of God.

283. If ye are on a journey,
And cannot find
A scribe, a pledge
With possession (may serve
The purpose).³³⁴
And if one of you
Deposits a thing
On trust with another,³³⁵
Let the trustee
(Faithfully) discharge
His trust, and let him
Fear his Lord.
Conceal not evidence ;
For whoever conceals it,—
His heart is tainted³³⁶
With sin. And God
Knoweth all that ye do.

۲۸۳- وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ
وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا
فَرِهْنِ مَقْبُوضَةً
فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا
فَالْيَدِ الَّتِي أَوْثِقْنَ أَمَانَتَهُ
وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ
وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ
وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ إِيَّمًا قَلْبُهُ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

C. 53.—Our honesty and upright conduct
(ii. 284-286.) Are not mere matters of policy
Or convenience : all our life in this world
Must be lived as in the presence of God.
The finest example of Faith we have
In the Apostle's life : full of faith,
Let us render willing obedience
To God's Will. Our responsibility,
Though great, is not a burden
Greater than we can bear : let us
Pray for God's assistance, and He will help.

SECTION 40.

284. **ALL** that God belongeth all
That is in the heavens
And on earth. Whether
Ye show what is in your minds
Or conceal it, God
Calleth you to account for it.

۲۸۴- لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ
وَلَنْ تَبْدُوْا مَا فِيْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ
اَوْ تَخْفَوْهُ يَحْصِيْكُمْ بِاللّٰهِ

334. A pledge or security stands on its own independent footing, though it is a very convenient form of closing the bargain where the parties cannot trust each other, and cannot get a written agreement with proper witnesses.

335. The law of Deposit implies great trust in the Depositary on the part of the Depositor. The Depositary becomes a trustee, and the doctrine of Trust can be further developed on that basis. The trustee's duty is to guard the interests of the person on whose behalf he holds the trust and to render back the property and accounts when required according to the terms of the trust. This duty again is linked to the sanction of Religion, which requires a higher standard than Law.

336. It sometimes happens that if some inconvenient piece of evidence is destroyed or concealed, we gain a great advantage materially. We are warned not to yield to such a temptation. The concealment of evidence has a serious effect on our own moral and spiritual life, for it taints the very source of higher life, as typified by the heart. The heart is also the seat of our secrets. We are told that the sin will reach our most secret being, though the sin may not be visible or open to the world. Further, the heart is the seat of our affections, and false dealing taints all our affections.

He forgiveth whom He pleaseth,
And punisheth whom He pleaseth.
For God hath power
Over all things.

فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ○

285. The Apostle believeth
In what hath been revealed
To him from his Lord,
As do the men of faith.
Each one (of them) believeth
In God, His angels,
His books, and His apostles.³³⁷
"We make no distinction (they say)
Between one and another³³⁸
Of His apostles." And they say:
"We hear, and we obey:
(We seek) Thy forgiveness,³³⁹
Our Lord, and to Thee
Is the end of all journeys."

٢٨٥- اٰمَنَ الرَّسُوْلُ بِمَا اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْهِ
مِنْ رَّبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ
كُلٌّ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلٰئِكَتِهِ
وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
لَا تَفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ
وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا
عُظْمٰنَكَ رَبَّنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ ○

286. On no soul doth God
Place a burden greater
Than it can bear.³⁴⁰
It gets every good that it earns,
And it suffers every ill that it earns.
(Pray :) "Our Lord!
Condemn us not
If we forget or fall
Into error; our Lord!
Lay not on us a burden
Like that which Thou
Didst lay on those before us;³⁴¹

٢٨٦- لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا
لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ
رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا اِنْ كُنْهِنَا
اَوْ اَخْطَاْنَا
رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا
اِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ
عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا

337. This Sūra started with the question of Faith (vv. 3-4), showed us various aspects of Faith and the denial of Faith, gave us ordinances for the new People of Islam as a community, and now rounds off the argument again with a confession of Faith and of its practical manifestation in conduct ("we hear and we obey"), and closes on a note of humility, so that we may confess our sins, ask for forgiveness, and pray for God's help and guidance.

338. Cf. ii. 136 and ii. 253 n. It is not for us to make any distinction between one and another of God's apostles: we must honour them all equally, though we know that God in His wisdom sent them with different kinds of mission and gave them different degrees of rank.

339. When our faith and conduct are sincere, we realise how far from perfection we are, and we humbly pray to God for the forgiveness of our sins. We feel that God imposes no burden on us that we cannot bear, and with this realisation in our hearts and in the confession of our lips, we go to Him and ask for His help and guidance.

340. Cf. ii. 233. In that verse the burden was in terms of material wealth: here it is in terms of spiritual duty. Assured by God that He will accept from each soul just such duty as it has the ability to offer, we pray further on for the fulfilment of that promise.

341. We must not be arrogant, and think that because God has granted us His favour and mercy we have no need to exert ourselves, or that we are ourselves superior to those before us. On the contrary, knowing how much they failed, we pray that our burdens should be lightened, and we confess our realisation that we have all the greater need for God's mercy and forgiveness.

And so we end the whole argument of the Sūra with a prayer for God's help, not in our own selfish ends, but in our resolve to uphold God's truth against all Unbelief.

Our Lord ! lay not on us
 A burden greater than we
 Have strength to bear.
 Blot out our sins,
 And grant us forgiveness.
 Have mercy on us.
 Thou art our Protector ;
 Help us against those
 Who stand against Faith."

رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحِثْ عَلَيْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ
 وَاعْفُ عَنَّا
 وَارْحَمْنَا
 أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا
 فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ۝



In S. xlii. the **ح** and **س** are put in separate verses. From that point of view they may be considered two separate combinations. The first combination has already been listed under the group of two-letter combinations.

This arithmetical analysis brings certain facts into prominence. I do not know how far they have a bearing on the inner meaning of the *Muqatta'āt*.

The combinations of abbreviated letters that run in a series in consecutive Sūras is noticeable. For example, **ح** occurs in six consecutive Sūras from xl. to xlv.

The combination **ا** occurs in six consecutive Sūras x. to xv., but in one of them (S. xiii.) it is modified to **ا**, connecting it with the **ا** series. The **ا** series covers 6 Sūras. It begins with S. ii. and S. iii., which are practically the beginning of the Qurān, and ends with the four consecutive Sūras xxix. to xxxii. I call S. ii. and S. iii. practically the beginning of the Qurān, because S. i. is considered a general introduction to the Qurān, and the first Sīpāra is commonly known as **ا**, the first verse of S. ii. The combination **ط** is prefixed to S. xxvi. and S. xxviii., but the intervening

S. xxvii. has the combination **ط**, which may be considered a syncopated form, or the three-letter combination **ط** may be considered an extended form of **ط**. Again

the question arises: Does the **م** in **ا**, **ح** and **ط**, stand for the same signification, or does it mean a different thing in each case? We may generalise and say that there are three series of six, and one series of three, and the others occur all singly.

We should logically look for a common factor in the Sūras bearing the same initials, and this factor should be different for Sūras bearing other initials. In all cases where the abbreviated letters occur, there is some mention of the Qurān or the Book. The *Iqān* makes an exception in the case of three Sūras, '*Ankabūt* (S. xxix), *Rūm* (S. xxx), and *Nūn* (S. lxviii). But a close perusal will show that these Sūras are no exceptions. In xxix 27 we have a reference to the Book remaining in the family of Abraham, and later on we have a whole Section (Rukū' No. 5), devoted to the Book, with special reference to the continuity of revelation in the previous Books and the Qurān (xxix 45-51). In xxx 58 there is express mention of the Qurān, and the whole argument of the Sūra leads up to the intimate relation between God's "Signs" in nature (vv. 20-27) and His revelation in the Qurān. In S. lxviii. the very first verse begins the theme with the Pen as the instrument of writing, exhorts Muṣṭafā to stand forth boldly to proclaim the Message, and ends (v. 52) with the declaration that it is a Message for all the worlds.

These are general considerations, which I have thought it most convenient to present in the form of an Appendix.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA III (*Āl-i-'Imrān*).

This Sūra is cognate to Sūra II, but the matter is here treated from a different point of view.

Like Sūra II, it takes a general view of the religious history of mankind, with special reference to the People of the Book, proceeds to explain the birth of the new People of Islam and their ordinances, insists on the need of struggle and fighting in the cause of Truth, and exhorts those who have been blessed with Islam to remain constant in Faith, pray for guidance, and maintain their spiritual hope for the Future.

The new points of view developed are: (1) The emphasis is here laid on the duty of the Christians to accept the new light; the Christians are here specially appealed to, as the Jews were specially appealed to in the last Sūra; (2) the lessons of the battles of Badr and Uḥud are set out for the Muslim community; and (3) the responsibilities of that community are insisted on both internally and in their relations to those outside.

God having revealed His Book, confirming previous revelations, we must accept it in all reverence, try to understand its meaning, and reject the base motives which make Truth unacceptable to those who reject Faith. (iii. 1-20, and C. 54.)

The People of the Book had only a portion of the Book and if they reject the complete Book, the People of Faith must part company with them, and their day is done. (iii. 21-30, and C. 55.)

The story of the family of 'Imrān (the father of Moses) leads us from the Mosaic Dispensation to the miracles connected with the birth of Jesus and his ministry. (iii. 31-63, and C. 56.)

God's revelation being continuous, all people are invited to accept its completion in Islam, and controversies are deprecated. The Muslims are asked to hold together in union and harmony, and are promised security from harm from their enemies, and enjoined to seek friendship among their own people. (iii. 64-120, and C. 57.)

The battle of Badr showed how God helps and upholds the virtuous, and how patience, perseverance, and discipline find their reward; on the other hand, the lessons of Uḥud must be learnt, not in despair, but in the exercise of the higher virtues and in contempt of pain and death. (iii. 121-148, and C. 58.)

The misfortunes at Uḥud are shown to be due to the indiscipline of some, the indecision and selfishness of others, and cowardice on the part of the Hypocrites, but no enemy can hurt God's Cause. (iii. 149-180, and C. 59.)

The taunts of the enemy should be disregarded, and sincere prayer offered to God, Who would grant them success and prosperity. (iii. 181-200, and C. 60.)

C. 54. - The Qurān revelation has, step by step,
(iii. 1-20.) Confirmed the Law of Moses and the Gospel
Of Jesus. It is a guide from God,
And appeals to reason and understanding.
Let us understand it rightly, in reverence
And truth, unswayed by those who reject
Faith, and seeking ever the reward
Of the pleasure of God, through firmness,
Patience, discipline, and charity, and offering others
The light which we have ourselves received.

9. "Our Lord ! Thou art He
That will gather mankind
Together against a Day about ^{which}
There is no doubt ; for God
Never fails in His promise."³⁴⁹

٩- رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَاوِمُ النَّاسِ
لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ۝

SECTION 2.

10. Those who reject Faith,—
Neither their possessions
Nor their (numerous) progeny
Will avail them aught
Against God : they are
But fuel for the Fire.
11. Their resistance will be
No better than that
Of the people of Pharaoh,³⁵⁰
And their predecessors :
They denied our Signs,
And God called them to account
For their sins.
For God is strict
In punishment.
12. Say to those who reject Faith :
"Soon will ye be vanquished"³⁵¹
And gathered together
To Hell,—an evil couch
Indeed (to lie on) !
13. "There has already been
For you a Sign

١٠- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ
أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ وَقُودُ النَّارِ ۝

١١- كَذَّابِ أَبِى فِرْعَوْنَ
وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَآخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝

١٢- قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَتُغْلَبُونَ
وَيُنْصَرُونَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ
وَيُنْصَرُونَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ ۝

١٣- قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ

349. This is the prayer of those who are firmly grounded in knowledge. The more they know, the more they realise how little they know of all the depths of Truth in the spiritual world. But they have Faith. The glimpses they get of Truth they wish to hold fast in their hearts and they pray to God to preserve them from deviating even from what light they have got. They are sure of their eventual return to God, when all doubts will be solved.

350. From the beginning of the world, sin, oppression, arrogance, and want of Faith have gone together. The Pharaoh of the time of Moses relied upon his power, his territory, his armies, and his resources to mock at Moses the man of God and to oppress the people of Moses. God saved the Israelites and punished their oppressors through many plagues and calamities.

351. As Moses warned the Egyptians, so the warning is here sounded to the Pagan Arabs, till the battle of Badr (referred to in the next verse) had been a warning how Faith must conquer without the help of God. The next few decades saw the Byzantine and the Persian Empires overthrown because of their arrogance and their resistance to the Law of God.

In the two armies
That met (in combat) : ³⁵²
One was fighting in the Cause
Of God, the other
Resisting God ; these saw
With their own eyes
Twice their number. ³⁵³
But God doth support
With His aid whom He pleaseth.
In this is a warning
For such as have eyes to see."

فِي فِئَتَيْنِ الْعَقَاتِرُ فِئَةٌ لِّتَعَاوِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ وَأُخْرَى كَافِرَةٌ
يَرَوْنَهُمْ فَيَنْهَوْنَ رَأْيَ الْعَيْنِ
وَاللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصَرِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

14. Fair in the eyes of men
Is the love of things they covet : ³⁵⁴
Women and sons ;
Heaped-up hoards
Of gold and silver ; horses
Branded (for blood and excellence) ;
And (wealth of) cattle
And well-tilled land.
Such are the possessions
Of this world's life ;
But nearness to God
Is the best of the goals
(To aim at).
15. Say : Shall I give you
Glad tidings of things
Far better than those ?
For the righteous are Gardens

۱۴- زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ
النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ
مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالنَّوْصَةِ
وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ
وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ
ذَٰلِكَ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا
وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَاٰبِ ۝

۱۵- قُلْ أَؤْتِيكُمْ خَيْرًا مِّمَّنْ ذَٰلِكُمْ
لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ

352. This refers to the battle of Badr in Ramadhān in the second year of the Hijra. The little exiled community of Mecca Muslims, with their friends in Medina had organised themselves into a God-fearing community, but were constantly in danger of being attacked by their Pagan enemies of Mecca, in alliance with some of the disaffected elements (Jews and Hypocrites) in or near Medina itself. The design of the Meccans was to gather all the resources they could, and with an overwhelming force, to crush and annihilate Muḥammad and his party. To this end Abū Sufyān was leading a richly-laden caravan from Syria to Mecca. He called for armed aid from Mecca. The battle was fought in the plain of Badr, about 50 miles south-west of Medina. The Muslim force consisted of only about 313 men, mostly unarmed, but they were led by Muḥammad, and they were fighting for their Faith. The Meccan army, well-armed and well-equipped, numbered over a thousand and had among its leaders some of the most experienced warriors of Arabia, including Abū Jahl, the inveterate foe and persecutor of Islam. Against all odds the Muslims won a brilliant victory, and many of the enemy leaders, including Abū Jahl, were killed.

353. It was impossible, without the miraculous aid of God, for such a small and ill-equipped force as was the Muslim band, to defeat the large and well-found force of the enemy. But their firmness, zeal, and discipline won them divine aid. Enemy prisoners stated that the enemy ranks saw the Muslim force to be many times larger than it was.

354. The pleasures of this world are first enumerated: women for love; sons for strength and pride; hoarded riches, which procure all luxuries; the best and finest pedigree horses; cattle, the measure of wealth in the ancient world, as well as the means and symbols of good farming in the modern world; and broad acres of well-tilled land. By analogy, we may include, for our mechanized age, machines of all kinds,—tractors, motor-cars, aeroplanes, the best internal combustion engines, etc., etc. In "heaped-up hoards of gold and silver," the Arabic word translated *hoards* is *qanāṭir*, plural of *qanṭār*, which literally means a Talent of 1,200 ounces of gold. That quantity of pure gold would coin into 5,097 sterling gold Sovereigns, each containing 123.274 grains of gold 22 carats fine. These at present prices (say, Rs. 20 to the sovereign) would be worth more than a lakh of rupees. Heaped hoards of *qanāṭir* would therefore be boundless wealth "as wish can claim."

In nearness to their Lord,
With rivers flowing beneath;
Therein is their eternal home;
With Companions pure (and
holy);³⁵⁵
And the good pleasure of God.
For in God's sight
Are (all) His servants,—

16. Namely, those who say :
"Our Lord ! we have indeed
Believed : forgive us, then,
Our sins, and save us
From the agony of the Fire ;"—

17. Those who show patience,
Firmness and self-control ;³⁵⁶
Who are true (in word and deed) ;
Who worship devoutly ;
Who spend (in the way of God) ;
And who pray for forgiveness
In the early hours of the
morning.³⁵⁷

18. There is no god but He :
That is the witness of God,
His angels, and those endued
With knowledge, standing firm³⁵⁸
On justice. There is no god but He,
The Exalted, the Wise.

19. The Religion before God
Is Islam (submission to His Will) :
Nor did the People of the Book
Dissent therefrom except

تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَرْوَاءُ مَطْهَرَةٌ
وَإَرْضَوانٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ بَالِغٌ عِلْمًا

١٦- الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا
إِنَّا أَمَنَّا فَأَعْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا
وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

١٧- الصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ
وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ
وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالسَّحَرِ

١٨- شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

١٩- إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ
وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الْأَدْيَانُ

355. Cf. ii. 25 and note.

356. *Ṣabr* (*Ṣābirn*) includes many shades of meaning : I have specified three here, viz., patience, firmness, and self-control. See ii. 45 and ii. 153 and notes thereon.

357. True servants of God are described in vv. 16 and 17. They have faith, humility, and hope (v. 16) ; and they have certain virtues (v. 17) viz., (1) patience, steadfastness, self-restraint, and all that goes under the full definition of *ṣabr* ; this shows a certain attitude of mind ; (2) in all their dealings they are true and sincere as they are also in their promises and words ; this marks them out in social conduct ; (3) further, their spiritual worship is earnest and deep, an inner counterpart of their outward conduct ; (4) their worship of God shows itself in their love of their fellow-men, for they are ready and liberal in charity ; and (5) their self-discipline is so great that the first thing they do every morning is humbly to approach their God.

358. God Himself speaks to us through His revelations (through angels) and through His Creation, for all Nature glorifies God. No thinking mind, if it only judges the matter fairly, can fail to find the same witness in his own heart and conscience. All this points to the Unity of God, His exalted nature, and His wisdom.

Through envy of each other,³⁵⁹
After knowledge had come to them.
But if they deny the Signs of God,
God is swift in calling to account.

إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعٌ الْحِسَابِ

20. So if they dispute with thee,
Say : " I have submitted
My whole self³⁶⁰ to God
And so have those
Who follow me."
And say to the People of the Book
And to those who are unlearned :³⁶¹
" Do ye (also) submit yourselves ?"
If they do, they are in right
guidance,
But if they turn back,
Thy duty is to preach the Message ;
And in God's sight
Are (all) His servants.³⁶²

۲۰- فَإِنْ حَاجُّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّهِ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِ

وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ

وَالْأُمِّيِّينَ ءَأَسْلَمْتُمْ

فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُوا فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا

وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاءُ

وَاللَّهُ بِصِرِّهِمْ بِالْعَبَادِ ۝

- C. 55.—If the People who received
(iii 21-30.) Earlier revelations confine themselves
To partial truths, and in their pride
Shut their eyes to the whole of the Book
Of God, their day is done :
Let the Muslims seek the society
And friendship of their own, and trust
In God, who knows all, and holds
Every soul responsible for its own deeds.

SECTION 3.

21. **As** to those who deny
The Signs of God, and in defiance

۲۱- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ

359. *Bagyan* : through envy, through selfish contumacy or obstinacy, through sheer contrary-mindedness, or desire to resist or rebel. Cf. ii. 90, and ii. 213.

360. *Wajh* : whole self. See note to ii. 112.

361. The People of the Book may be supposed to know something about the previous religious history of mankind. To them the appeal should be easy and intelligible, as all Religion is one, and it is only being renewed in Islam. But the appeal is also made to the Pagan Arabs, who are unlearned, and who can well be expected to follow the example of one of their own, who received divine enlightenment, and was able to bring new knowledge to them. A great many of both these classes did so. But the few who resisted God's grace, and actually threatened and persecuted those who believed, are told that God will look after His own.

362. Note the literary skill in the argument as it proceeds. The mystery of birth faintly suggests that we are coming to the story of Jesus. The exposition of the Book suggests that Islam is the same religion as that of the People of the Book. Next we are told that the People of the Book made their religion one-sided, and through the priesthood of the family of Imrān, we are brought to the story of Jesus, who was rejected by a body of the Jews as Muhammad was rejected by a body of both Jews and Christians.

Of right,³⁶³ slay the prophets,
And slay those who teach
Just dealing with mankind,³⁶⁴
Announce to them a grievous

penalty.

22. They are those whose works
Will bear no fruit³⁶⁵
In this world
And in the Hereafter,
Nor will they have
Any one to help.

23. Hast thou not turned
Thy vision to those
Who have been given a portion³⁶⁶
Of the Book? They are
Invited to the Book of God,
To settle their dispute,
But a party of them
Turn back and decline
(The arbitration).³⁶⁷

24. This because they say :
"The Fire shall not touch us
But for a few numbered days"³⁶⁸
For their forgeries deceive them
As to their own religion.

25. But how (will they fare)
When We gather them together

وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ
الَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ النَّاسِ ۚ
فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ۝
۲۲-أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ۝

۲۳-أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِنَ
الْكِتَابِ يَأْتُونَكَ إِلَىٰ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ
لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّىٰ فِرْيَانًا مِنْهُمْ
وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ۝

۲۴-ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَنْ نَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ
إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ۖ
وَعَنَىٰ لَهُمْ فِي دِينِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْكُرُونَ ۝
۲۵-فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جُمِعْتَهُمْ

363. *Right*: *ḥaqq* has many shades of meaning : (1) right, in the sense of having a right to something; (2) right, in the sense of straight conduct, as opposed to wrong; (3) truth; (4) justice. All these shades are implied here.

364. Examples of the Prophets slain were : "the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" : Matt. xxiii. 35. Cf. Q. ii. 61, and second note. Again, John the Baptist (Yahyā, noble, chaste, a prophet, of the goodly company of the righteous, Q. iii. 39), was bound, imprisoned and beheaded, and his head presented to a dancing harlot : Matt. xiv. 1-11. An example of a just man in another nation, who taught righteousness and was put to death, was Socrates, the Greek, philosopher.

365. Cf. ii. 217, end.

366. *A portion of the Book*. I conceive that God's revelation as a whole throughout the ages is "The Book." The Law of Moses, and the Gospel of Jesus were portions of the Book. The Qurān completes the revelation and is *par excellence* the Book of God.

367. The Commentators mention a particular incident when a dispute was submitted by the Jews for arbitration to the Holy Apostle. He appealed to the authority of their own books, but they tried to conceal and prevaricate. The general lesson is that the People of the Book should have been the first to welcome in Muḥammad the living exponent of the Message of God as a whole, and some of them did so; but others turned away from guilty arrogance, relying on corrupted texts and doctrines forged out of their own fancies, though they were not conformable to reason and good sense.

368. Cf. Q. ii. 80.

Against a Day about which
There is no doubt,
And each soul will be paid out
Just what it has earned,
Without (favour or) injustice ?

26. Say "Oh God!
Lord of Power (and Rule)
Thou givest Power
To whom Thou pleasest,
And Thou strippest off Power
From whom Thou pleasest :
Thou enduest with honour
Whom Thou pleasest,
And Thou bringest low
Whom Thou pleasest :
In Thy hand is all Good.³⁶⁹
Over all things
Thou hast power.

27. " Thou causest the Night
To gain on the Day,
And Thou causest the Day
To gain on the Night ;³⁷⁰
Thou bringest the Living
Out of the Dead,
And Thou bringest the Dead
Out of the Living ;³⁷¹
And Thou givest sustenance
To whom Thou pleasest,
Without measure."³⁷²

28. ~~Let~~ not the Believers
Take for friends or helpers

لَيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ
وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ
وَهُمْ لَا يَنْظُرُونَ ○

٢٦- قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمَلِكِ
تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ
وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ
وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ
وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ
بِيَدِكَ الْخُسُفُ
إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ○

٢٧- تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ
وَتُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ
وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ
وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ
وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ○

٢٨- لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ

369. Another glorious passage, full of meaning, both obvious and mystic. The governing phrase in it all is: "In Thy hand is all Good." What is the standard by which we may judge Good? It is God's Will. Therefore when we submit to God's Will, and real Islam illuminates us, we see the highest Good. There has been and is much controversy as to what is the Highest Good. To the Muslim there is no difficulty: it is the Will of God. He must ever strive to learn and understand that Will. But once in that fortress, he is secure. He is not troubled with the nature of Evil. Evil is the negation of God's Will. Good is conformity to God's Will. He does not cry with impatience against many things which give him pain and sorrow. He knows that "God is in His world", and that God is Good. God's Will is another name for God's Plan. There is nothing arbitrary or haphazard. We do not see the whole Plan or Will. But we have Faith. All is, will be, must be, right in the end.

370. True in many senses. In every twenty-four hours, night merges into day, and day into night, and there is no clear boundary between them. In every solar year, the night gains on the day after the summer solstice, and the day gains on the night after the winter solstice. But further, if light and darkness are viewed as symbols of (a) knowledge and ignorance, (b) happiness and misery, (c) spiritual insight and spiritual blindness, God's Plan or Will works here too as in the physical world, and in His hand is all Good.

371. We can interpret Dead and Living in even more senses than Day and Night: death physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual. Life and Death may also apply to collective, group, or national life. And who has ever solved the mystery of Life? But Faith refers it to God's Will and Plan.

372. Again true in all the senses suggested in the two previous notes. The only true Reality is God. All else has its basis and sustenance in Him. Lest our little minds create fear out of "nicely calculated less or more", we are told at once that God's bounty is without measure or account.

Unbelievers rather than
Believers : if ye do that,
In nothing will there be help
From God : except by way
Of precaution, that ye may
Guard yourselves from them.³⁷³
But God cautions you
(To remember) Himself ;
For the final goal
Is to God.

29. Say : " Whether ye hide
What is in your hearts
Or reveal it,
God knows it all :
He knows what is
In the heavens,
And what is on earth.
And God has power
Over all things.

30. " On the Day when every soul
Will be confronted
With all the good it has done,
And all the evil it has done,
It will wish there were
A great distance
Between it and its evil.
But God cautions you
(To remember) Himself.
And God is full of kindness
To those that serve Him."

مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فليْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي
شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاتُوا
وَيَحْذَرُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ
وَالِلَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

٢٩- قُلْ إِنْ تَخْفَوْنَ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ
أَوْ يُبْدَوْهُ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمُوتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

٣٠- يَوْمَ يُحَدِّثُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ
مَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُخْضَرًّا
وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ
تَوَكَّلْ أَنْ يَسْنَأَ وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا
وَيَحْذَرُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ
وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

سَأَلَهُ
فِي
الْآخِرَةِ
بِ
الْأَمْرِ

- C. 56.—God's truth is continuous, and His Apostles
(iii. 31-63.) From Adam, through Noah and Abraham,
Down to the last of the Prophets, Muḥammad,
Form one brotherhood. Of the progeny
Of 'Imrān, father of Moses and Aaron,
Sprang a woman, who devoted
Her unborn offspring to God.
The child was Mary the mother of Jesus.
Her cousin was the wife of the priest
Zakariya, who took charge of Mary.

373. If Faith is a fundamental matter in our lives, our associations and friendships will naturally be with those who share our Faith. " Evil communications corrupt good manners " : and evil company may corrupt Faith. In our ordinary every-day affairs of business, we are asked to seek the help of Believers rather than Unbelievers. Only in this way can our community be strong in organisation and unity. But where there is no question of preference, or where in self-defence we have to take the assistance of those not belonging to our Faith, that is permissible. In any case we must not weaken our Brotherhood : we must try to make it stronger if possible.

To Zakariya, in his old age, was born
 A son Yahya, amid prodigies :
 Yahya was the herald of Jesus
 The son of Mary, and was known
 As John the Baptist. Jesus
 Was of virgin birth,
 And performed many miracles.
 But those to whom he came as Prophet
 Rejected him, and plotted for his death.
 Their plots failed, for God's Plan
 Is above man's plots. So will it be
 With Islam, the Truth from all eternity.

SECTION 4.

31. Say: "If ye do love God,
 Follow me: God will love you
 And forgive you your sins:
 For God is Oft-Forgiving,
 Most Merciful."
32. Say: "Obey God
 And His Apostle":
 But if they turn back,
 God loveth not those
 Who reject Faith.
33. God did choose
 Adam and Noah, the family
 Of Abraham, and the family
 Of 'Imrān above all people,—
34. Offspring, one of the other:³⁷⁴
 And God heareth
 And knoweth all things.
35. Behold! a woman of 'Imrān³⁷⁵
 Said: "Oh my Lord! I do

٣١- قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ
 فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ
 وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

٣٢- قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ
 فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا
 فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ

٣٣- إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ
 إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

٣٤- ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ
 وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

٣٥- إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي

374 The Prophets in the Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dispensation form one family literally. But the argument is wider. All men of God form spiritually one family. If you love and obey God, love and obey His Messenger who is actually present with you (in the flesh or in his teaching). Your love, obedience, and discipline will be the test of your Faith.

375 Now we begin the story of Jesus. As a prelude we have the birth of Mary and the parallel story of John the Baptist, Yahya the son of Zakariya. Yahya's mother Elisabeth was a cousin of Mary the mother of Jesus (Luke i. 36), and therefore John and Jesus were cousins by blood, and there was a spiritual cousinhood in their birth and career. Elisabeth was of the daughters of Aaron (Luke i. 5), of a priestly family which went back to Aaron the brother of Moses and son of 'Imrān. Her husband Zakariya was actually a priest, and her cousin Mary was presumably also of a priestly family. By tradition Mary's mother was called Hannah (in Latin, Anna, and in English, Anne), and her father was called 'Imrān. Hannah is therefore both a descendant of the priestly house of 'Imrān and the wife of 'Imrān,—a woman of 'Imrān in a double sense.

Dedicate unto Thee
What is in my womb
For Thy special service:³⁷⁶
So accept this of me:
For Thou hearest
And knowest all things."

36. When she was delivered,
She said: "Oh my Lord!
Behold! I am delivered
Of a female child!"—
And God knew best
What she brought forth—³⁷⁷
"And nowise is the male
Like the female."³⁷⁸
I have named her Mary,
And I commend her
And her offspring
To Thy protection
From the Evil One,
The Rejected."

37. Right graciously
Did her Lord accept her:
He made her grow
In purity and beauty:
To the care of Zakariya
Was she assigned.
Every time that he entered
(Her) chamber to see her,
He found her supplied
With sustenance. He said:
"Oh Mary! Whence (comes) this
To you?" She said:
"From God: for God
Provides sustenance
To whom He pleases,
Without measure."³⁷⁹

لَذَرْتُكَ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا
فَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّي
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّعُّبُ الْعَلِيمُ ○

٣٦- فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا
أُنْثَىٰ
وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ
وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَوُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ
وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ
وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ
وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ○

٣٧- فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ
وَأَقْبَتَهَا أَتْبَانًا حَسَنًا وَكَلَّمَهَا زَكَرِيَّا
كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ
وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا
قَالَ يَتَرَىٰمُ إِلَىٰ كَيْفِ هَذَا
قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
بَغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ○

376. Muḥarrar—freed from all worldly affairs and specially dedicated to God's service. She expected a son, who was to be a special devotee, a miraculous son of the old age of his parents, but God gave her instead a daughter. But that daughter was Mary the mother of Jesus, the chosen one among the women: iii. 42.

377. The mother of Mary expected a male child. Was she disappointed that it was a female child? No, for she had Faith, and she knew that God's Plan was better than any wishes of hers. Mary was no ordinary girl: only God knew what it was that her mother brought forth.

378. The female child could not be devoted to Temple service under the Mosaic law, as she intended. But she was marked out for a special destiny as a miracle-child, to be the mother of the miracle-child Jesus. She was content to seek God's protection for her against all evil. There is a certain sense of pride in the girl on the part of the mother.

379. Mary grew under God's special protection. Her sustenance, under which we may include both her physical needs and her spiritual food, came from God, and her growth was indeed a "goodly growth", which I have tried to express in the Text by the words "purity and beauty". Some apocryphal Christian writings say that she was brought up in the Temple to the age of twelve like a dove, and that she was fed by angels.

38. Where did Zakariya
Pray to his Lord, saying :
" Oh my Lord ! Grant unto me
From Thee a progeny
That is pure : for Thou
Art He that heareth prayer ! " ³⁸⁰

۳۸- هُنَالِكَ دَعَا ذِكْرِيَا رَبَّهُ قَالِ رَبِّ هَبْ
لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً
إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ۝

39. While he was standing
In prayer in the chamber,
The angels called unto him :
" God doth give thee
Glad tidings of Yahya,
Who would testify to the truth
Of a Word from God, ³⁸¹ and (be
Besides) noble, chaste,
And a Prophet,—
Of the (goodly) company
Of the righteous."

۳۹- فَنَادَاهُ الْمَلَكُ
ذُو الْقَلَمِ يَصِلُنِي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ
أَنْ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بَيِّنِي
مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا
وَنَبِيًّا مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ۝

40. He said : " Oh my Lord !
How shall I have a son,
Seeing I am very old,
And my wife is barren ?"
" Thus," was the answer,
" Doth God accomplish
What He willeth."

۴۰- قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ
وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ الْكَبَرِ
وَأَمْرَانِ عَادُو
قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۝

41. He said : " Oh my Lord !
Give me a Sign !"
" Thy Sign," was the answer,
" Shall be that thou
Shalt speak to no man
For three days
But with signals.
Then celebrate
The praises of thy Lord
Again and again,
And glorify Him
In the evening
And in the morning."

۴۱- قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً
قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَتُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ
فَلَمَّا آتَاكُمْ
إِلَّا رَمْسًا
وَاذْكُرُوا رَبَّكُمْ كَثِيرًا
وَسَبِّحُوا بِحَمْدِهِ فِي الْعِشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ۝

380. The birth of Mary, the mystic mother of Jesus, of John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus, and of Jesus, the mystic prophet of Israel, whom Israel rejected, occurred in that order chronologically, and are told in that order. They are all inter-connected. Zakariya prayed for no ordinary son. He and his wife were past the age of parenthood. Seeing the growth of the mystic girl Mary, he prayed for some mystic child from God,—“from Thee, a progeny that is pure”. Perhaps he had adoption in his mind. Did he want to adopt Mary? To his surprise, he is given a son in the flesh, ushered in by a mystic Sign.

381. Notice : “ a Word from God ”, not “ the Word of God ”, the epithet that mystical Christianity uses for Jesus. As stated in v. 59 below Jesus was created by a miracle, by God’s word “ Be ”, and he was.

SECTION 5.

42. Behold! the angels said:
"Oh Mary! God hath chosen thee
And purified thee—chosen thee
Above the women of all nations."³⁸²

٢٢- وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَكَةُ يَسْمِعُكَ اللَّهُ
أَصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى سَائِرِ
الْعَالَمِينَ ○

43. "Oh Mary! worship
Thy Lord devoutly:
Prostrate thyself,
And bow down (in prayer)
With those who bow down."

٢٣- يَسْمِعُكَ اللَّهُ لِرَبِّكِ وَاسْجُدِي
وَارْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ○

44. This is part of the tidings
Of the things unseen,³⁸³
Which We reveal unto thee
(Oh Apostle!) by inspiration:
Thou wast not with them
When they cast lots
With arrows,³⁸⁴ as to which
Of them should be charged
With the care of Mary:
Nor wast thou with them
When they disputed (the point).³⁸⁵

٢٤- ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ
نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ، وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ
إِذْ يُلْقُونَ أَقْلَامَهُمْ
إِلَيْهِمْ يُكَلِّفُ لِمِزْمَرٍ
وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ
إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ○

45. Behold! the angels said:
"Oh Mary! God giveth thee
Glad tidings of a Word
From Him: his name
Will be Christ Jesus,³⁸⁶
The son of Mary, held in honour
In this world and the Hereafter
And of (the company of) those
Nearest to God,"³⁸⁷

٢٥- وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَكَةُ يَسْمِعُكَ اللَّهُ
يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ ۖ
اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
وَجِئْنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ○

382. Mary the mother of Jesus was unique, in that she gave birth to a son by a special miracle, without the intervention of the customary physical means. This of course does not mean that she was more than human, any more than that her son was more than human. She had as much need to pray to God as anyone else. The Christian dogma, in all sects except the Unitarian, holds that Jesus was God and the son of God. The worship of Mary became the practice in the Roman Catholic Church, which calls Mary the Mother of God. This seems to have been endorsed by the Council of Ephesus in 431, in the century before Muhammad was born to sweep away the corruptions of the Church of Christ. For *ʿĀlamīn* as meaning all nations, see iii. 96, n. 423.

383. *Things unseen*: mystic, spiritual. The whole story has a mystic meaning, and it would be unseemly to dispute or speculate about it.

384. Literally, *reeds*: *aqḷām*. For the Arab custom of casting lots with arrows, see ii. 219, second note.

385. Christian apocryphal writings mention the contention between the priests as to the honour of taking charge of Mary, and how it was decided by means of rods or reeds in favour of Zakariya.

386. *Christ*: Greek, *Christos*—anointed: kings and priests were anointed to symbolise consecration to their office. The Hebrew and Arabic form is *Masīḥ*.

387. Nearest to God: *Muqarrabīn*, Cf. Q. lvi. 11.

46. "He shall speak to the people
In childhood and in maturity.³⁸⁸
And He shall be (of the company)
Of the righteous."

٣٨٨- وَيَكْلِمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا
وَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝

47. She said : " Oh my Lord !³⁸⁹
How shall I have a son
When no man hath touched me ? "
He said : " Even so :
God createth
What He willeth :
When He hath decreed
A Plan, He but saith
To it, ' Be, ' and it is !

٣٨٩- قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ
وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ
قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ
لِذَا قُضِيَ أَمْرٌ
فَأَنكُمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ۝

48. " And God will teach him
The Book and Wisdom,
The Law and the Gospel,

٣٩٠- وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ۝

49. " And (appoint him)
An apostle to the Children
Of Israel, (with this message) :
" I have come to you,
With a Sign from your Lord,
In that I make for you
Out of clay, as it were,
The figure of a bird,
And breathe into it,
And it becomes a bird
By God's leave :³⁹⁰
And I heal those
Born blind, and the lepers,
And I quicken the dead,
By God's leave ;
And I declare to you
What ye eat, and what ye store³⁹¹
In your houses. Surely
Therein is a Sign for you
If ye did believe ;

٣٩١- وَرَسُولًا إِلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَاتٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ
فَأَنفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا
بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ
وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَكْبُرُونَ
فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمُ إِن
كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

388. The ministry of Jesus lasted only about three years, from 30 to 33 years of his age, when in the eyes of his enemies he was crucified. But the Gospel of Luke (ii. 46) describes him as disputing with the doctors in the Temple at the age of 12, and even earlier, as a child, he was "strong in spirit, filled with wisdom" (Luke ii. 40). Some apocryphal Gospels describe him as preaching from infancy.

389. She was addressed by angels, who gave her God's message. In reply she speaks as to God. In reply, apparently an angel again gives God's message.

390. This miracle of the clay birds is found in some of the apocryphal Gospels ; those of curing the blind and the lepers and raising the dead are in the canonical Gospels. The original Gospel (see v 48) was not the various stories written afterwards by disciples, but the real Message taught direct by Jesus.

391. I do not know whether this clause refers to a particular incident, or generally to a prophetic knowledge of what is not known to ordinary people.

50. " (I have come to you),
To attest the Law
Which was before me.
And to make lawful
To you part of what was
(Before) forbidden to you ;
I have come to you
With a Sign from your Lord.
So fear God,
And obey me.

٥٠- وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا
بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ
وَأَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي
كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ هُدًى وَمِنْ تَحْتِهَا يَدُ اللَّهِ
فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا

51. " ' It is God
Who is my Lord
And your Lord ;
Then worship Him.
This is a Way
That is straight. ' "

٥١- إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي
وَرَبُّكُمْ فَأَعْبُدُوا
هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

52. When Jesus found
Unbelief on their part
He said: " Who will be
My helpers to (the work
Of) God ? " Said the Disciples:
" We are God's helpers:
We believe in God,
And do thou bear witness
That we are Muslims. ³⁹²

٥٢- فَلَمَّا أَحْسَسَ عِيسَى مِنْهُمْ الْكُفْرَ
قَالَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ
قَالُوا الْمَوَالِيُونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ
أَمَّا بِآلِهِ
وَالشَّهَدَاءِ بِآثَانَا مُسْلِمُونَ

53. " Our Lord ! we believe
In what Thou hast revealed,
And we follow the Apostle ;
Then write us down
Among those who bear witness. "

٥٣- رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ
وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ
فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

54. And (the unbelievers)
Plotted and planned,
And God too planned, ³⁹³
And the best of planners
Is God.

٥٤- وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ
وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

392. The story of Jesus is told with special application to the time of the Apostle Muhammad. Note the word helpers (Anṣār) in this connection, and the reference to plotters in v. 54. It was the one Religion—the Religion of God which was in essence the religion of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. The argument runs: why do ye then now make divisions and reject the living Teacher? Islam is: bowing to the Will of God. All who have faith should bow to the Will of God and be Muslims.

393. The Arabic *makara* has both a bad and a good meaning, that of making an intricate plan to carry out some secret purpose. The enemies of God are constantly doing that. But God—in whose hands is all good—has His plans also, against which the evil ones will have no chance whatever.

59. The similitude of Jesus
Before God is as that of Adam;³⁹⁸
He created him from dust,
Then said to him: "Be":
And he was.

٥٩- إِنْ مَثَلُ عِيسَى عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ
خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ
ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ۝

60. The Truth (comes)
From God alone;
So be not of those
Who doubt.³⁹⁹

٦٠- الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
فَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْمُتَرَدِّينَ ۝

61. If any one disputes
In this matter with thee,
Now after (full) knowledge
Hath come to thee,
Say: "Come! let us
Gather together,—
Our sons and your sons,
Our women and your women,
Ourselves and yourselves:
Then let us earnestly pray,
And invoke the curse
Of God on those who lie!"⁴⁰⁰

٦١- فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا
نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ
وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا
وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ
فَنُدْعُ اللَّهَ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ ۝

62. This is the true account:⁴⁰¹
There is no god
Except God;
And God—He is

٦٢- إِنْ هَذَا لَكُمُ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ
وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَكُمُ

398. After a description of the high position which Jesus occupies as a prophet, we have a repudiation of the dogma that he was God, or the Son of God, or anything more than a man. If it is said that he was born without a human father, Adam was also so born. Indeed Adam was born without either a human father or mother. As far as our physical bodies are concerned they are mere dust. In God's sight Jesus was as dust just as Adam was or humanity is. The greatness of Jesus arose from the divine command "Be": for after that he was—more than dust—a great spiritual leader and teacher.

399. The truth does not necessarily come from priests, or from the superstitions of whole peoples. It comes from God, and where there is a direct revelation, there is no room for doubt.

400. In the year of Deputations, 10th of the Hijra, came a Christian embassy from Najrān (towards Yaman, about 150 miles north of Ṣana'a). They were much impressed on hearing this passage of the Qurān explaining the true position of Christ, and they entered into tributary relations with the new Muslim State. But ingrained habits and customs prevented them from accepting Islam as a body. The Holy Apostle, firm in his faith, proposed a *Mubāhala*, i. e., a solemn meeting, in which both sides should summon not only their men, but their women and children, earnestly pray to God, and invoke the curse of God on those who should lie. Those who had a pure and sincere faith would not hesitate. The Christians declined and they were dismissed in a spirit of tolerance, with a promise of protection from the State in return for tribute, "the wages of rule," as it is called in the *Āim i-Akhḥari*.

401. We are now in a position to deal with the questions which we left over at ii. 87. Jesus is no more than a man. It is against reason and revelation to call him God or the Son of God. He is called the son of Mary to emphasize this. He had no known human father, as his birth was miraculous. But it is not this which raises him to his high spiritual position as a prophet, but because God called him to his office. The praise is due to God, Who by His word gave him spiritual strength—his birth and his life and death, but also to his mother Mary and his precursor Yahyā. These clear Signs and surrounded him with mysteries of their own invention,

The Exalted,
The Wise.

الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ○

63. But if they turn back,
God hath full knowledge
Of those who do mischief.

۶۳- فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ ○

- C. 57. Islam doth invite all people
(iii. 64-120.) To the Truth : there is no cause
For dissembling or disputing.
False are the people who corrupt
God's truth, or hinder men
From coming to God. Let the Muslims
Hold together in unity and discipline,
Knowing that they have a mission
Of righteousness for humanity.
No harm can come to them.
Though there are good men and true
In other Faiths, Muslims must
Be true to their own Brotherhood.
They should seek help and friendship
From their own, and stand firm
In constancy and patient perseverance.

SECTION 7.

64. Say: "Oh People
Of the Book! come
To common terms
As between us and you :
That we worship
None but God;
That we associate
No partners with Him ;
That we erect not,
From among ourselves,
Lords and patrons
Other than God."⁴⁰²
If then they turn back,
Say ye: "Bear witness
That we (at least)
Are Muslims (bowing
To God's Will)."

۶۴- قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ
سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ
أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ
وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَلْحَقَ
بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ أَزْوَاجًا
مِمَّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا
فَعَدُوًّا مُلْحَقًا
بِأَكْثَرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ○

402. In the abstract the People of the Book would agree to all three propositions. In practice they fail. Apart from doctrinal lapses from the unity of the One True God, there is the question of a consecrated Priesthood (among the Jews it was hereditary also), as if a mere human being—Cohen, or Pope, or Priest, or Brahman,—could claim superiority apart from his learning and the purity of his life, or could stand between man and God in some special sense. The same remarks apply to the worship of saints. They may be pure and holy, but no one can protect us or claim Lordship over us except God. For Rabb, see i. 2. n. Abraham was a true man of God, but he could not be called a Jew or a Christian as he lived long before the Law of Moses or the Gospel of Jesus was revealed.

65. Ye People of the Book!

Why dispute ye
About Abraham,
When the Law and the Gospel
Were not revealed
Till after him?
Have ye no understanding?

66. Ah! Ye are those

Who fell to disputing
(Even) in matters of which
Ye had some knowledge!⁴⁰³
But why dispute ye
In matters of which
Ye have no knowledge?
It is God Who knows,
And ye who know not!

67. Abraham was not a Jew

Nor yet a Christian;
But he followed the Truth
And bowed his will to God's,
(Which is Islam),
And he joined not gods with
God.⁴⁰⁴

68. Without doubt, among men,

The nearest of kin to Abraham,
Are those who follow him,
As are also this Apostle
And those who believe:
And God is the Protector
Of those who have faith.

69. It is the wish of a section

Of the People of the Book
To lead you astray.
But they shall lead astray
(Not you), but themselves,
And they do not perceive!

70. Oh People of the Book!

Why reject ye

٦٥- يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ
لِمَ تَحْجُمُونَ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا الْقُرْآنَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ
إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ○

٦٦- هَآؤُنَا هَؤُلَاءِ حَاجِبُونَ
فِيمَا لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ
لَمْ تَحْجُمُونَ فِيمَا
لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ○

٦٧- مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا
وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا
وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ○

٦٨- إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ
لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ○

٦٩- وَكَذَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
لَوْ يَضِلُّوكُمْ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ○

٧٠- يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ

403. The number of sects among the Jews and Christians shows that they wrangled and disputed even about some of the matters of their own religion, of which they should have had some knowledge. But when they talk of Father Abraham, they are entirely out of court, as he lived before their peculiar systems were evolved.

404. Cf. ii. 135 and the whole argument in that passage.

The Signs of God,
Of which ye are
Yourselves witnesses?

71. Oh ye People of the Book!
Why do ye clothe
Truth with falsehood,
And conceal the Truth,
While ye have knowledge? ⁴⁰⁵

SECTION 8.

72. **A** section of the People
Of the Book say:
"Believe in the morning ⁴⁰⁶
What is revealed
To the Believers,
But reject it at the end
Of the day; perchance
They may (themselves)
Turn back;
73. "And believe no one
Unless he follows
Your religion."
Say: "True guidance
Is the guidance of God:
(Fear ye) lest a revelation ⁴⁰⁷
Be sent to some one (else)
Like unto that which was sent
Unto you? Or that those
(Receiving such revelation)
Should engage you in argument
Before your Lord?" ⁴⁰⁸
Say: "All bounties
Are in the hand of God:
He granteth them
To whom He pleaseth:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ
يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ
بِالْحَقِّ بِالْبَاطِلِ
وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
وَقَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
أَصْحَابُ الْيَدَيْنِ
أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا لَدِينٍ
أَمْثَلُ وَجْهِ النَّهَارِ
وَالْأَعْرَابُ آخِرًا لَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ
وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا
إِلَّا بِمَن تَدِينُ رَبِّيُمْ
قُلْ إِنَّ الْهُدَى هُدَى اللَّهِ
أَنْ يُؤْتِيَ أَحَدًا
وَقُلْ مَا أَدْبَيْتُمْ
أَوْ يُخَاجِكُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ
قُلْ إِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ
يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

405. There are many ways of preventing the access of people to the truth. One is to tamper with it, or trick it out in colours of falsehood: half-truths are often more dangerous than obvious falsehoods. Another is to conceal it altogether. Those who are jealous of a man of God, whom they actually see before them, do not allow his credentials or virtues to be known, or vilify him, or conceal facts which would attract people to him. When people do this of set purpose, against their own light ("of which ye are yourselves witnesses"), they are descending to the lowest depths of degradation, and they are doing more harm to themselves than to any one else.

406. *Wajh* here has the sense of "beginning", "early part". The cynics who plotted against Islam actually asked their accomplices to join the Believers and then repudiate them.

407. The two clauses following have been variously construed, and some translations leave the sense ambiguous. I have construed the conjunction "an" to mean "lest", as it undoubtedly does in vii. 172, "an *taqūlū*", etc.

408. Cf. ii. 76. The People of the Book were doubly annoyed at the Muslims: (1) that they should (being outside their ranks) receive God's revelations, and (2) that having received such revelations, they should be able to convict them out of their own scriptures before their Lord!

And God careth for all,
And He knoweth all things."

74. For His Mercy He specially
chooseth

Whom He pleaseth;
For God is the Lord
Of bounties unbounded.

75. Among the People of the Book
Are some who, if entrusted
With a hoard of gold,⁴⁰⁹
Will (readily) pay it back;
Others, who, if entrusted
With a single silver coin,⁴¹⁰
Will not repay it unless
Thou constantly stoodest
Demanding, because,
They say, "there is no call
On us (to keep faith)
With these ignorant (Pagans)."⁴¹¹
But they tell a lie against God,
And (well) they know it.

76. Nay.—Those that keep
Their plighted faith
And act aright,—verily
God loves those
Who act aright.

77. As for those who sell
The faith they owe to God
And their own plighted word
For a small price,⁴¹²
They shall have no portion
In the Hereafter:

وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝

٤٣- يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ۝

٤٥- وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ
بِقِطْعَةِ يُودُوعٍ إِلَيْكَ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَا يُؤَدُّ
إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا
فِي الْأُمُورِ شَيْءٌ
وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

٤٦- رُبُّى مَنْ أَدَّى بِعَهْدِهِ
وَأَتَّقَى

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝

٤٧- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ
وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ قِطْعًا بِقِطْعَةٍ
أَوْ لَهْيًا لَظْمًا فِي الْآخِرَةِ

409 Hoard of gold : qinār : a talent of 1,200 ounces of gold, more than a lakh of rupees. See iii. 14. n.

410. Silver coin : dinār. In the later Roman Empire, the denarius was a small silver coin, about the size of a four-anna piece. It must have been current in Syria and the markets of Arabia in the time of our Apostle. It was the coin whose name is translated in the English Bible by the word penny, Matt. xxii. 19 : hence the abbreviation of penny is d (=denarius). The later Arabian coin *dinār* coined by the Umayyads, was a gold coin after the pattern of the Byzantine (Roman) *denarius aureus*, and weighed about 66.319 grains troy, just a little more than a half-sovereign.

411. Every race imbued with race arrogance resorts to this kind of moral or religious subterfuge. Even if its members are usually honest or just among themselves, they are contemptuous of those outside their circle, and cheat and deceive them without any qualms of conscience. This is a "lie against God".

412. All our duties to our fellow-creatures are referred to the service and faith we owe to God. But in the matter of truth an appeal is made to our own self-respect as responsible beings : is it becoming that we should be false to our own word, to ourselves? And then we are reminded that the utmost we can gain by falsifying God's word or being untrue to ourselves is 'but a miserable price'. We get at best something very paltry as the price for selling our very souls.

Nor will God
Deign to speak to them
Or look at them
On the Day of Judgment
Nor will He cleanse them⁴¹³
(Of sin): they shall have
A grievous Penalty.

78. There is among them
A section who distort
The Book with their tongues:
(As they read) you would think
It is a part of the Book,
But it is no part
Of the Book; and they say,
"That is from God,"
But it is not from God:
It is they who tell
A lie against God,
And (well) they know it!

79. It is not (possible)
That a man, to whom
Is given the Book,
And Wisdom,
And the Prophetic Office,
Should say to people:
"Be ye my worshippers
Rather than God's";⁴¹⁴
On the contrary
(He would say):
"Be ye worshippers
Of Him Who is truly
The Cherisher of all:
For ye have taught
The Book and ye
Have studied it earnestly."

80. Nor would he instruct you
To take angels and prophets⁴¹⁵
For Lords and Patrons.
What! would he bid you

وَلَا يَجْعَلُهُمُ اللَّهُ
وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

٤٨- وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلْوَنَ السُّبُحَةَ
بِالْكِتَابِ لِيَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ
عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكِبَابِ
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

٤٩- مَا كَانَ لِيَشْهَدَ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالنَّبُوَّةَ
ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ
كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي
مَنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّكُمْ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابِ
وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ

٨٠- وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ
وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَابًا أَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْتَكْفُرِ

413. Even on sinners—ordinary sinners—God will look with compassion and mercy; He will speak words of kindness and cleanse them of their sins. But those who are in active rebellion against God and sin against their own light,—what mercy can they expect?

414. It is not in reason or in the nature of things that God's messenger should preach against God. Jesus came to preach the true God.

415. Jesus was a prophet, and the Holy Spirit "with which he was strengthened" was the Angel who brought the revelations to him.

To unbelief after ye have
Bowed your will
(To God in Islam)?

SECTION 9.

81. Behold! God took
The Covenant of the Prophets,⁴¹⁶
Saying: "I give you
A Book and Wisdom;
Then comes to you
An Apostle, confirming
What is with you;
Do ye believe in him
And render him help."
God said: "Do ye agree,
And take this my Covenant
As binding on you?"
They said: "We agree."
He said: "Then bear witness,
And I am with you
Among the witnesses."

82. If any turn back
After this, they are
Perverted transgressors.

83. Do they seek
For other than the Religion
Of God?—while all creatures
In the heavens and on earth
Have, willing or unwilling,⁴¹⁷
Bowed to His Will
(Accepted Islam),
And to Him
Shall they all return.

بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ٥

٨١- وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ
لَمَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ
ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ
لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ
قَالَ أَأَقْرَضُكُمْ وَأَخَذْتُكُمْ عَلَى ذَلِكَ
إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَكْثَرُتْنَا
قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا
وَإِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ٥

٨٢- فَمَنْ تَوَلَّى بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ
فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ٥

٨٣- أَفَعَدِدُوا دِينَ اللَّهِ يَبْعَثُونَ وَلَوْ أَنْتُمْ
مِنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا
لَمَّا إِلَهُ يَرْجِعُونَ ٥

416. Cf. ii. 63 and note. The argument is: You (People of the Book) are bound by your own oaths, sworn solemnly in the presence of your own Prophets. In the Old Testament as it now exists, Muhammad is foretold in Deut. xviii. 18; and the rise of the Arab nation in Isaiah, xli. 11, for Kedar was a son of Isma'il and the name is used for the Arab nation: in the New Testament as it now exists, Muhammad is foretold in the Gospel of St. John, xiv. 16, xv. 26, and xvi. 7: the future Comforter cannot be the Holy Spirit as understood by Christians, because the Holy Spirit already was present, helping and guiding Jesus. The Greek word translated "Comforter" is "Paracletos", which is an easy corruption from "Periclytos", which is almost a literal translation of "Muhammad" or "Ahmad": see Q. lxi. 6. Further, there were other Gospels that have perished, but of which traces still remain, which were even more specific in their reference to Muhammad; e. g., the Gospel of St. Barnabas, of which an Italian translation is extant in the State Library at Vienna. It was edited in 1907, with an English translation by Mr. Lonsdale and Laura Ragg.

417. God's Truth is manifest, and all that is good and true and sane and normal accepts it with joy. But even where there is "disease in the heart" (Q. ii. 10), or judgment is obscured by perversity, every creature must eventually see and acknowledge God and His power (ii. 167). Cf. R. Bridges: "Testament of Beauty": iv. 1419-22:—"For God's love is unescapable as nature's environment, which if a man ignore or think to thrust it off, he is the ill-natured fool that runneth blindly on death." All Nature adores God, and Islam asks for nothing peculiar or sectarian; it but asks that we follow our nature and make our will conformable to God's Will as seen in Nature, history, and revelation. Its message is universal.

84. Say: " We believe
In God, and in what
Has been revealed to us
And to Abraham, Ismā'il,
Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes,
And in (the Books)
Given to Moses, Jesus,
And the Prophets,
From their Lord:
We make no distinction
Between one and another
Among them, and to God
Do we submit (in Islam)."

۸۴- قُلْ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَمَا اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا
وَمَا اُنْزِلَ عَلٰى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْمٰعِيْلَ
وَاِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ وَالْاَسْبَاطِ
وَمَا اَوْتِيَ مُوسٰى وَعِيسٰى
وَالنَّبِيُّوْنَ
مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ
بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ
وَ نَحْنُ لَهٗ مُسْلِمُوْنَ ۝

85. If any one desires
A religion other than
Islam (submission to God),⁴¹⁸
Never will it be accepted
Of him; and in the Hereafter
He will be in the ranks
Of those who have lost
(All spiritual good)—

۸۵- وَ مَنْ يَّبْتَغِ
غَيْرَ الْاِسْلَامِ دِيْنًا
فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ ۚ
وَهُوَ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ
مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ۝

86. How shall God
Guide those who reject
Faith after they accepted it
And bore witness
That the Apostle was true
And that Clear Signs
Had come unto them?
But God guides not
A people unjust.

۸۶- كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللّٰهُ قَوْمًا
كَفَرُوْا بَعْدَ اِيْمَانِهِمْ
وَشَهِدُوْا
اَنَّا الرُّسُوْلُ حَقٌّ
وَجَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنٰتُ
وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝

87. Of such the reward
Is that on them (rests)

۸۷- اُولٰٓئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ

418. The Muslim position is clear. The Muslim does not claim to have a religion peculiar to himself. Islam is not a sect or an ethnic religion. In its view all Religion is one, for the Truth is one. It was the religion preached by all the earlier Prophets. It was the truth taught by all the inspired Books. In essence it amounts to a consciousness of the Will and Plan of God and a joyful submission to that Will and Plan. If any one wants a religion other than that, he is false to his own nature as he is false to God's Will and Plan. Such a one cannot expect guidance, for he has deliberately renounced guidance.

The curse of God,
Of His angels,
And of all mankind;—

88. In that will they dwell;
Nor will their penalty
Be lightened, nor respite
Be their (lot);—^{418a}

89. Except for those that repent
(Even) after that,
And make amends;
For verily God
Is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

90. But those who reject
Faith after they accepted it,
And then go on adding
To their defiance of Faith,—
Never will their repentance
Be accepted; for they
Are those who have
(Of set purpose) gone astray.

91. As to those who reject
Faith, and die rejecting,—
Never would be accepted
From any such as much
Gold as the earth contains,
Though they should offer it
For ransom. For such

³ Is (in store) a penalty grievous,

³⁰ And they will find no helpers.

أَن عَلَيْهِمْ لعنة الله
والملائكة والناس أجمعين ۝

٨٨-خلدين فيها لا يخفف
عنه العذاب ولا هم ينظرون ۝

٨٩-إلا الذين تابوا
من بعد ذلك
وأصلحوا ۝
فإن الله غفور رحيم ۝

٩٠-إن الذين كفروا
بعد إيمانهم
ثم ازدادوا كفرا
لن تقبل توبتهم
وأولئك هم الضالون ۝

٩١-إن الذين كفروا وماتوا وهم كفار
فكن يقبل من أحدهم
مملء الأرض ذهباً لو افترقوا
أولئك لهم عذاب أليم
وما لهم من نصيرين ۝

SECTION 10.

92. By no means shall ye
Attain righteousness unless
Ye give (freely) of that ⁴¹⁹
Which ye love; and whatever
Ye give, of a truth
God knoweth it well.

93. All food was lawful
To the Children of Israel,
Except what Israel ⁴²⁰
Made unlawful for itself,
Before the Law (of Moses)
Was revealed. Say :
"Bring ye the Law
And study it,
If ye be men of truth."

94. If any, after this, invent
A lie and attribute it
To God, they are indeed
Unjust wrong-doers.

95. Say : "God speaketh
The Truth: follow
The religion of Abraham,
The sane in faith; he
Was not of the Pagans." ⁴²¹

96. The first House (of worship)
Appointed for men
Was that at Bakka : ⁴²²
Full of blessing

٩٢- لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا حُبَبْتُمْ
وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ۝

٩٣- كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لِبَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ
إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَءِيلُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ
مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنْزَلَ الْتَّوْرَةُ
فَلْيَأْتُوا بِالْحَقِّ بَلَاغًا
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۝

٩٤- مَن افترى عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ مِنْ بَعْدِ
ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ۝

٩٥- قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ
فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَآتَوْا لَهُمْ حَقَّهُمْ
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۝

٩٦- إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ
لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا

419. The test of charity is : do you give something that you value greatly, something that you love ? If you give your life in a Cause, that is the greatest gift you can give. If you give yourself, that is, your personal efforts, your talents, your skill, your learning, that comes next in degree. If you give your earnings, your property, your possessions, that is also a great gift ; for many people love them even more than other things. And there are less tangible things, such as position, reputation, the well-being of those we love, the regard of those who can help us, etc. It is unselfishness that God demands, and there is no act of unselfishness, however small or intangible, but is well within the knowledge of God.

420. The Arabs ate the flesh of the camel, which is lawful in Islam, but it was prohibited by the Jewish Law of Moses (Leviticus xi. 4). But that Law was very strict because of the "hardness of heart" of Israel, because of Israel's insolence and iniquity (Q. vi. 146). Before it was promulgated Israel was free to choose its own food. I take "Israel" here to stand for the people of Israel.

421. The greater freedom of Islam in the matter of the ceremonial law, compared with the Mosaic Law, is not a reproach but a recommendation. We go back to an older source than Judaism,—the institutions of Abraham. By common consent his Faith was sound, and he was certainly not a Pagan, a term contemptuously applied to the Arabs by the Jews.

422. Bakka : same as Mecca ; perhaps an older name. The foundation of the Ka'ba goes back to Abraham, but there are place associations in the sacred territory with the names of Adam and Eve, e. g., at 'Arafat, the Mount of Mercy (see first note to ii. 197).

And of guidance
For all kinds of beings: ⁴²³

97. In it are Signs
Manifest; for example,
The Station of Abraham; ⁴²⁴
Whoever enters it
Attains security; ⁴²⁵
Pilgrimage thereto is a duty
Men owe to God,—
Those who can afford
The journey; but if any
Deny faith, God stands not
In need of any of His creatures.

98. Say: "Oh People of the Book!
Why reject ye the Signs
Of God, when God
Is Himself witness
To all ye do?"

99. Say: "Oh ye People of the Book!
Why obstruct ye
Those who believe,
From the Path of God,
Seeking to make it crooked,
While ye were yourselves
Witnesses (to God's Covenant)? ⁴²⁶
But God is not unmindful
Of all that ye do."

100. Oh ye who believe!
If ye listen
To a faction
Among the People of the Book,
They would (indeed)
Render you apostates
After ye have believed!

101. And how would ye
Deny Faith while unto you
Are rehearsed the Signs
Of God, and among you

وَهْدَىٰ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ۝

٩٧- فِيهِ آيَاتٌ يُّذَكِّرُ مَقَامَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا
وَاللَّهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ حَكِيمٌ
مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا
وَمَنْ كَفَرَ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

٩٨- قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ
لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝

٩٩- قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ
لِمَ تَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
مَنْ آمَنَ تَبِيعُونَهَا عِوَجًا
وَأَنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءُ
وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝

١٠٠- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
إِنْ تُحِبُّوا قَرِيبًا
مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
يَرُدُّوكُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفْرِينَ ۝
١٠١- وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ
وَأَنْتُمْ تُثَلِّثُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَفِيكُمْ

423. 'Alamîn: all the worlds (i. 2, n.); all kinds of beings; all nations (iii. 42); all creatures (iii. 97).

424. Station of Abraham: see ii. 125 and first note.

425. See reference in last note.

426. Cf. iii. 81.

Lives the Apostle ?
Whoever holds
Firmly to God
Will be shown
A Way that is straight.

SECTION 11.

102. **Oh** ye who believe !
Fear God as He should be ⁴²⁷
Feared, and die not
Except in a state ⁴²⁸
Of Islam.

103. And hold fast,
All together, by the Rope ⁴²⁹
Which God (stretches out
For you), and be not divided
Among yourselves;
And remember with gratitude
God's favour on you;
For ye were enemies ⁴³⁰
And He joined your hearts
In love, so that by His Grace,
Ye became brethren;
And ye were on the brink
Of the Pit of Fire,
And He saved you from it.
Thus doth He make
His Signs clear to you:
That ye may be guided.

104. Let there arise out of you
A band of people
Inviting to all that is good,
Enjoining what is right,

رَسُولُهُ وَمَنْ يَتَصَوَّمْ بِاللَّهِ
فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ٥

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَتَّى تَقْبَلُوا
إِلَّاهُ وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ٥

١٠٣- وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا
وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ
فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا
وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ
فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا
كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ٥

١٠٤- وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ
وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

427. Fear is of many kinds: (1) the abject fear of the coward; (2) the fear of a child or an inexperienced person in the face of an unknown danger; (3) the fear of a reasonable man who wishes to avoid harm to himself or to people whom he wishes to protect; (4) the reverence which is akin to love, for it fears to do anything which is not pleasing to the object of love. The first is unworthy of man; the second is necessary for one spiritually immature; the third is a manly precaution against evil as long as it is unconquered; and the fourth is the seed-bed of righteousness. Those mature in faith cultivate the fourth; at earlier stages, the third or the second may be necessary; they are fear, but not the fear of God. The first is a feeling of which any one should be ashamed.

428. Our whole being should be permeated with Islam; it is not a mere veneer or outward show.

429. The simile is that of people struggling in deep water, to whom a benevolent Providence stretches out a strong and unbreakable rope of rescue. If all hold fast to it together, their mutual support adds to the chance of their safety.

430. Yathrib was torn with civil and tribal feuds and dissensions before the Apostle of God set his sacred feet on its soil. After that, it became the City of the Prophet, Medina, an unmatched Brotherhood, and the pivot of Islam. This poor quarrelsome world is a larger Yathrib: can we establish the sacred feet on its soil, and make it a new and larger Medina?

And forbidding what is wrong :
They are the ones
To attain felicity.⁴³¹

105. Be not like those
Who are divided
Amongst themselves
And fall into disputations
After receiving
Clear Signs:
For them
Is a dreadful Penalty,—

106. On the Day when
Some faces will be (lit up
With) white, and some faces
Will be (in the gloom of)
black:⁴³²
To those whose faces
Will be black, (will be said):
"Did ye reject! Faith
After accepting it?
Taste the Penalty
For rejecting Faith."

107. But those whose faces
Will be (lit with) white,—
They will be in (the light
Of) God's mercy : therein
To dwell (for ever).

108. These are the Signs
Of God. We rehearse them
To thee in Truth :
And God means
No injustice to any
Of His creatures.

109. To God belongs all
That is in the heavens

وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ○

١٠٥- وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا
وَاجْتَلَفُوا
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ○

١٠٦- يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ
فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ
أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ
فَلَوْ قُوتُوا الْعَذَابَ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ○

١٠٧- وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ابْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ
فَإِنِّي رَحِيمٌ اللَّهِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ○

١٠٨- تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ
نُتْلِيهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ○

١٠٩- وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ

431. *Muflih, aflah, falah* : the root idea is attainment of desires ; happiness, in this world and the next ; success ; prosperity ; freedom from anxiety, care, or a disturbed state of mind ; — the opposite of 'aḡāb in the next verse, which includes : failure ; misery ; punishment or penalty ; agony or anguish.

The ideal Muslim community is happy, untroubled by conflicts or doubts, sure of itself, strong, united, and prosperous : because it invites to all that is good ; enjoins the right ; and forbids the wrong,—a master-stroke of description in three clauses.

432. The "face" (*waḡh*) expresses our Personality, our inmost being. White is the colour of Light ; to become white is to be illumined with Light, which stands for felicity, the rays of the glorious light of God. Black is the colour of darkness, sin, rebellion, misery ; removal from the grace and light of God. These are the Signs of heaven and hell. The standard of decision in all questions is the justice of God.

And on earth: to Him
Do all questions
Go back (for decision).⁴³³

SECTION 12.

110. We are the best
Of Peoples, evolved
For mankind,
Enjoining what is right,
Forbidding what is wrong,
And believing in God.⁴³⁴
If only the People of the Book
Had faith, it were best
For them: among them
Are some who have faith,
But most of them
Are perverted transgressors.

111. They will do you no harm,
Barring a trifling annoyance;
If they come out to fight you,
They will show you their backs,
And no help shall they get.

112. Shame is pitched over them⁴³⁵
(Like a tent) wherever
They are subdued,
Except when under a covenant
(Of protection) from God
Or from men; they draw
On themselves wrath from God,
And pitched over them
Is (the tent of) destitution.
This because they rejected
The Signs of God, and slew
The Prophets in defiance of
right;⁴³⁶

وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ۝

۱۱۰- كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ
تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ
مِنْكُمْ الْيُودُ يُؤْمِنُونَ
وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ۝

۱۱۱- لَنْ يَضُرَّكُمْ إِلَّا أَذًى
وَلَنْ يَغْلِبَكُمْ يُوَلَّوْكُمْ الْأَدْبَارُ
ثُمَّ لَا يُنْصَرُونَ ۝

۱۱۲- ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلِيلَةُ أَيْنَ مَا ظَفَرُوا
إِلَّا يَحْبِلَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ
وَبَاءٌ وَبَغْضٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ ۚ ذَلِكَ بِاِكْفَامِهِمْ
كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَيَقْتُلُونَ الرُّسُلَ إِنْ كُنُوا لِيَعْلَمُوا بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ ۚ

433. Cf. ii. 210.

434. The logical conclusion to the evolution of religious history is a non-sectarian, non-racial, non-doctrinal, universal religion, which Islam claims to be. For Islam is just submission to the Will of God. This implies (1) Faith, (2) doing right, being an example to others to do right, and having the power to see that the right prevails, (3) eschewing wrong, being an example to others to eschew wrong, and having the power to see that wrong and injustice are defeated. Islam therefore lives, not for itself, but for mankind. The People of the Book, if only they had faith, would be Muslims, for they have been prepared for Islam. Unfortunately there is Unfaith, but it can never harm those who carry the banner of Faith and Right, which must always be victorious.

435. *Dhuribat*: I think there is a simile from the pitching of a tent. Ordinarily a man's tent is a place of tranquillity and honour for him. The tent of the wicked after they are subdued is ignominy, shame, and humiliation. It is pity from God or from men that gives them protection when their pride has a fall. Using the same simile of a tent in another way, their home will be destitution and misery.

436. Cf. iii. 21, first note.

This because they rebelled
And transgressed beyond bounds.

ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ○

113. Not all of them are alike :
Of the People of the Book
Are a portion that stand
For the right ; they rehearse
The Signs of God all night long,
And they prostrate themselves⁴³⁷
In adoration.

١١٣- لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً ۚ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
أَجَةٌ قَائِمَةٌ
يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
أَنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ○

114. They believe in God
And the Last Day ;
They enjoin what is right,
And forbid what is wrong ;
And they hasten in emulation
In all good works :
They are in the ranks
Of the righteous.

١١٤- يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَيُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ
وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ○

115. Of the good that they do,
Nothing will be rejected
Of them ; for God knoweth well
Those that do right.

١١٥- وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَنْ يُكْفَرُوا
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ○

116. Those who reject faith,—
Neither their possessions
Nor their (numerous) progeny
Will avail them aught against
God :

They will be Companions
Of the Fire,—dwelling
Therein (for ever).⁴³⁸

١١٦- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ
أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ
مِنْ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۚ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ○

117. What they spend
In the life
Of this (material) world
May be likened to a Wind
Which brings a nipping frost:
It strikes and destroys the
harvest:
The owners have wronged

١١٧- مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا صِرٌّ
أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ
قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتْهُ ۚ

437. In Islam we respect sincere faith and true righteousness in whatever form they appear.

438. Cf. iii. 10.

Their own souls: it is not God
That harms them, but
themselves. 439

118. **O**h ye who believe !
Take not into your intimacy
Those outside your ranks :
They will not fail
To corrupt you. They
Only desire your ruin :
Rank hatred has already
Appeared from their mouths :
Something far worse
Is hidden in their hearts.
We have made plain
To you the Signs,
If ye have wisdom.

119. Ah ! ye are those
Who love them,
But they love you not,—
Though ye believe
In the whole of the Book. 440
When they meet you,
They say, " We believe " : 441
But when they are alone,
They bite off the very tips
Of their fingers at you
In their rage. Say :
" Perish in your rage ;
God knoweth well
All the secrets of the heart."

120. If aught that is good
Befalls you, it grieves them ;
But if your misfortune
Overtakes you, they rejoice

وَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِاللّٰهِ
وَلٰكِنْ اَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّوْنَ
۝۱۱۸
يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
لَا تَتَّخِذُوْا رِبٰطًاۙ مِّنْ دُوْنِكُمْ
لَا يٰۤاَلُوْنَكُمْ حَيٰلًاۙ وَدُوْا مَا عَيْنُكُمْ
قَدْ بَدَاۙتِ الْبَغْضَآءُ مِنْۢكُمْ اَفَاَنْتُمْ
وَمَا تَخْفٰىۙ صُدُّوْهُمْ اَكْبَرُ
قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ
۝۱۱۹
هَآٓنَتُمْۙ اَوْلَآءُ يُحِبُّوْنَكُمْۙ وَلَا يُحِبُّوْنَكُمْ
وَتُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْكِتٰبِ كُلِّهٖ
وَإِذَا الْقَوُۡمُ قَالُوْۤا اٰمَنَّاۙ
وَإِذَا خَلَوْا
عَظَمُوْا عَلٰىكُمْ الْاَنَآمِلَ
مِّنَ الْغِيْظِۙ قُلْ مُؤْمِنُوْا بِغِيْظِكُمْ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذٰتِ الصُّدُوْرِ
۝۱۲۰
اِنْ تَسْـَٔمِكُمْ حَسَنَةٌۭ تَّسُوْهُمُ
وَإِنْ تُصِبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌۭ يَّظْرَحُوْۤا بِهَاۙ

439. False "spending" may be either in false "charity" or in having a "good time". For the man who resists God's purpose, neither of them is any good. The essence of charity is faith and love. Where these are wanting, charity is no charity. Some baser motive is there : ostentation, or even worse, getting a person into the giver's power by a pretence of charity : something that is connected with the life of this grasping, material world. What happens ? You expect a good harvest. But "while you think, good easy man, full surely your greatness is a-ripening," there comes a nipping frost, and destroys all your hopes. The frost is some calamity, or the fact that you are found out ! Or perhaps it is "High-blown Pride," as in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, ii, 3. In your despair you may blame blind Fate or you may blame God ! Blind Fate does not exist, for there is God's Providence, which is just and good. The harm or injustice has come, not from God, but from your own soul. You wronged your soul, and it suffered the frost. Your base motive brought you no good : it may have reduced you to poverty, shame, and disgrace. All the brave show of the wicked in this life is but a wind charged with evil to themselves.

440. Islam gives you the complete revelation, "the whole of the Book," though partial revelations have come in all ages. (Cf. iii, 23, and first note.)

441. Cf. ii, 14.

At it. But if ye are constant
And do right,
Not the least harm
Will their cunning
Do to you; for God
Compasseth round about
All that they do.

وَأِنْ تَصُدُّوا عَنْتُمْ
لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

C. 58.—God's help comes to those who strive
(iii. 121-148.) With firmness, as it did at Badr.
Much can be learnt from the misfortunes
At Uhud. It is not for us
To question God's Plan, which is full
Of wisdom and mercy for all. Our duty
Is to stand firm and unswerving,
To obey, and in steadfast courage
To persevere, to retrieve our mistakes,
Not in grief and despair, but in firm hope
In God and in contempt of pain and death.

SECTION 13.

121. Remember that morning
Thou didst leave
Thy household (early)
To post the Faithful
At their stations for battle:⁴⁴²
And God heareth
And knoweth all things:

۱۲۱-وَأِذْ غَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ
تَبِيعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
مَقَاعِدَ لِلْقِتَالِ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

442. The battle of Uhud was a great testing time for the young Muslim community. Their mettle and the wisdom and strength of their Leader were shown in the battle of Badr (iii. 13 and note), in which the Meccan Pagans suffered a crushing defeat. The Meccans were determined to wipe off their disgrace and to annihilate the Muslims in Medina. To this end they collected a large force and marched to Medina. They numbered some 3,000 fighting men under Abū Sufyān, and they were so confident of victory that their women-folk came with them, and showed the most shameful savagery after the battle. To meet the threatened danger the Muslim Leader, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, with his usual foresight, courage, and initiative, resolved to take his station at the foot of Mount Uhud, which dominates the city of Medina some three miles to the north. Early in the morning, on the 7th of Shawwāl, A. H. 3 (January, 625), he made his dispositions for battle. Medina winters are notoriously rigorous, but the warriors of Islam (700 to 1000 in number) were up early. A torrent bed (*Nullah*) was to their south, and the passes in the hills at their back were filled with 50 archers to prevent the enemy attack from the rear. The enemy were set the task of attacking the walls of Medina, with the Muslims at their rear. In the beginning the battle went well for the Muslims. The enemy wavered, but the Muslim archers, in disobedience of their orders, left their posts to join in the pursuit and share in the booty. There was also treachery on the part of the 300 "Hypocrites" led by 'Abdullah ibn Ubai, who deserted. The enemy took advantage of the opening left by the archers, and there was severe hand-to-hand fighting, in which numbers told in favour of the enemy. Many of the Companions and Helpers were killed. But there was no rout. Among the Muslim martyrs was the gallant Ḥamza, a brother of the Apostle's father. The graves of the martyrs are still shown at Uhud. The Apostle himself was wounded in his head and face, and one of his front teeth was knocked off. Had it not been for his firmness, courage, and coolness, all would have been lost. As it was, the Apostle, in spite of his wound, and many of the wounded Muslims, inspired by his example, returned to the field next day, and Abū Sufyān and his Meccan army thought it most prudent to withdraw. Medina was saved, but a lesson in faith, constancy, firmness, and steadfastness was learnt by the Muslims.

122. Remember two of your parties⁴⁴³
 Meditated cowardice ;
 But God was their protector,
 And in God should the Faithful
 Ever put their trust.

۱۲۲- اِذْ هَتَفَتْ طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِنْكُمْ
 اَنْ تَفْشَلَا ۚ وَاللّٰهُ وَلِيُّهُمَا
 وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ○

123. God had helped you
 At Badr, when ye were
 A contemptible little force ;
 Then fear God ; thus
 May ye show your gratitude.⁴⁴⁴

۱۲۳- وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِبَدْرٍ
 وَأَنْتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ
 فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُشْكُرُونَ ○

124. Remember thou saidst
 To the Faithful : " Is it not
 enough
 For you that God should help you
 With three thousand angels
 (Specially) sent down ?⁴⁴⁵

۱۲۴- اِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ اَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ
 اَنْ يُبَدِّلَ لَكُمْ رُبَّكُمْ
 بِمَا تَدْعُو الْاِلٰهَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُزْلِلِينَ ○

125. " Yea,—if ye remain firm,
 And act aright, even if
 The enemy should rush here
 On you in hot haste,
 Your Lord would help you
 With five thousand angels
 Making a terrific onslaught."⁴⁴⁶

۱۲۵- بَلَىٰ اِنْ تَصْبِرُوْا وَتَتَّقُوا
 وَيَاُوْثِقُوْا فُرُجَكُمْ هٰذَا يُبَدِّلْكُمْ
 رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ اَلْفٍ
 مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ ○

126. God made it but a message
 Of hope for you, and an
 assurance
 To your hearts : (in any case)
 There is no help
 Except from God,
 The Exalted, the Wise :⁴⁴⁷

۱۲۶- وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا بَشْرًا لَّكُمْ
 وَلِتُطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُكُمْ بِهِ
 وَمَا النَّصْرُ اِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ
 الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ○

443. The two parties wavering in their minds were probably the Banū Salma Khazrajit and the Banū Hāritha, but they rallied under the Apostle's inspiration. That incident shows that man may be weak, but if he allows his weak will to be governed by the example of men of God, he may yet retrieve his weakness.

444. Gratitude to God is not to be measured by words. It should show itself in conduct and life. If all the Muslims had learnt the true lesson from the victory at Badr, their archers would not have left the posts appointed for them, nor the two tribes mentioned in the last note ever wavered in their faith.

445. Read v. 124 with the following five verses, to get its full signification.

446. *Musawwim* : this is the active voice of the verb, not to be confused with the passive voice in iii. 14, which has a different signification.

447. Whatever happens, whether there is a miracle or not, all help proceeds from God. Man should not be so arrogant as to suppose that his own resources will change the current of the world plan. God helps those who show constancy, courage, and discipline, and use all the human means at their disposal, not those who fold their hands and have no faith. But God's help is determined on considerations exalted far above our petty human motives, and by perfect wisdom, of which we can have only faint glimpses.

127. That He might cut off
A fringe of the Unbelievers⁴⁴⁸
Or expose them to infamy,
And they should then
Be turned back,
Frustrated of their purpose.

١٢٧-لِيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا

مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

أَوْ يَكْبِتَهُمْ فَيَنْقَلِبُوا خَائِبِينَ ○

128. Not for thee, (but for God),
Is the decision:
Whether He turn in mercy
To them, or punish them;
For they are indeed wrong-
doers.⁴⁴⁹

١٢٨-لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ

أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ

أَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ○

129. To God belongeth all
That is in the heavens
And on earth.
He forgiveth whom He pleaseth
And punishes whom He pleaseth;
But God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

١٢٩-وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ

وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ

وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ٥

SECTION 14.

130. Oh ye who believe!
Devour not Usury,⁴⁵⁰
Doubled and multiplied;
But fear God; that
Ye may (really) prosper.⁴⁵¹

١٣٠-يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا

أَضْعَافًا مُّضَاعَفَةً

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ○

131. Fear the Fire, which is prepared
For those who reject Faith:

١٣١-وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ

الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ○

448. A fringe of the Unbelievers: an extremity, an end, either upper or lower. Here it may mean that the chiefs of the Meccan Pagans, who had come to exterminate the Muslims with such confidence, went back frustrated in their purpose. The shameless cruelty with which they and their women mutilated the Muslim corpses on the battle-field will stand recorded to their eternal infamy. Perhaps it also exposed their real nature to some of those who fought for them, e. g., Khālid ibn Walid, who not only accepted Islam afterwards, but became one of the most notable champions of Islam. He was with the Muslims in the conquest of Mecca, and later on, won distinguished honours in Syria and Iraq.

449. Uhud is as much a sign-post for Islam as Badr. For us in these latter days it carries an even greater lesson. God's help will come if we have faith, obedience, discipline, unity, and the spirit of acting in righteousness and justice. If we fail, His mercy is always open to us. But it is also open to our enemies, and those who seem to us His enemies. His Plan may be to bring sinners to repentance, and to teach us righteousness and wisdom through those who seem in our eyes to be rebellious or even defiant. There may be good in them that He sees and we do not,—a humbling thought that must lead to our own self-examination and self-improvement.

450. Cf. ii. 275 and note. The last verse spoke of forgiveness, even to enemies. If such mercy is granted by God to erring sinners, how much more is it incumbent on us, poor sinners, to refrain from oppressing our fellow-beings in need, in matters of mere material and ephemeral wealth? Usury is the opposite extreme of charity, unselfishness, striving, and giving of ourselves in the service of God and of our fellow-men.

451. Real prosperity consists, not in greed, but in giving,—the giving of ourselves and of our substance in the cause of God and God's truth and in the service of God's creatures.

132. And obey God
And the Apostle ;
That ye may obtain mercy.
133. Be quick in the race
For forgiveness from your Lord,
And for a Garden whose width
Is that (of the whole)
Of the heavens
And of the earth,⁴⁵²
Prepared for the righteous,—
134. Those who spend (freely),⁴⁵³
Whether in prosperity,
Or in adversity ;
Who restrain anger,
And pardon (all) men ; —
For God loves those
Who do good ;—
135. And those who,⁴⁵⁴
Having done something
To be ashamed of,
Or wronged their own souls,⁴⁵⁵
Earnestly bring God to mind,
And ask for forgiveness
For their sins,—
And who can forgive
Sins except God?—
And are never obstinate
In persisting knowingly
In (the wrong) they have done.

١٣٢- وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَارْتَبِعُوا
لِعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ۝

١٣٣- وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَجَنَّةٍ
عَرْضُهَا السَّمُوتُ وَالْأَرْضُ ۚ
أُجِدْتُمُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝

١٣٤- الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ
وَالْكُلُوبِينَ الْعَظَمَاءِ
وَالْعَاقِلِينَ عَنِ الْكَأْسِ
وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۝

١٣٥- وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً
أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ
فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
وَمَنْ يَغْفِرَ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۚ
وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

452. The Fire (v. 131) is, as always, contrasted with the Garden in a spiritual sense,—in other words, Hell contrasted with Heaven. Lest we should think that heaven is a sort of enclosed material Garden somewhere in the skies, we are told that its width alone is that of the whole of the heavens and the earth,—all the creation we can imagine. In other words our spiritual felicity covers not merely this or that part of our being, but all life and all existence. Who can measure its width, or length, or depth?

453. Another definition of the righteous (vv. 134-35). So far from grasping material wealth, they give freely, of themselves and their substance, not only when they are well-off and it is easy for them to do so, but also when they are in difficulties, for other people may be in difficulties at the same time. They do not get ruffled in adversity, or get angry when other people behave badly, or their own good plans fail. On the contrary they redouble their efforts. For the charity—or good deed—is all the more necessary in adversity. And they do not throw the blame on others. Even where such blame is due and correction is necessary, their own mind is free from a sense of grievance, for they forgive and cover other men's faults. This as far as other people are concerned. But we may be ourselves at fault, and perhaps we brought some calamity on ourselves. The righteous man is not necessarily perfect. In such circumstances his behaviour is described in the next verse.

454. The righteous man, when he finds he has fallen into sin or error, does not whine or despair, but asks for God's forgiveness, and his faith gives him hope. If he is sincere, that means that he abandons his wrong conduct and makes amends.

455. Sin is a sort of oppression of ourselves by ourselves. This follows from the doctrine of personal responsibility, as opposed to that of blind fate or of an angry God or gods lying in wait for revenge or injury on mankind.

136. For such the reward
Is forgiveness from their Lord,
And Gardens with rivers
Flowing underneath,—
An eternal dwelling :
How excellent a recompense
For those who work (and strive) !

137. Many were the Ways of
That have passed away⁴⁵⁶
Before you : travel through
The earth, and see what was
The end of those
Who rejected Truth.

138. Here is a plain statement
To men, a guidance
And instruction to those
Who fear God !

139. So lose not heart,
Nor fall into despair :
For ye must gain mastery
If ye are true in Faith.

140. If a wound hath touched you,⁴⁵⁷
Be sure a similar wound
Hath touched the others.
Such days (of varying fortunes)
We give to men and men
By turns : that God may know
Those that He may take
To Himself from your ranks
Martyr-witnesses (to Truth).
For God loveth not
Those that do wrong.

١٣٦-أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ
مَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ يَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
وَلَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ

١٣٧-قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ
فَسيْرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَانظُرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

١٣٨-هَٰذَا بَيَانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ
وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

١٣٩-وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا
وَأَنْتُمْ الرَّاكِبُونَ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ

١٤٠-إِن يَسْسِسْكُمْ قَوْمٌ
فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَوْمٌ مِّثْلُهُ
وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَّٰى أُولَٰئِكَ النَّاسِ
وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَيُخَوِّدَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

456. Cf. Tennyson (In Memoriam) : " Our little systems have their day, They have their day and cease to be : They are but broken lights of Thee, And Thou, Oh Lord ! art more than they." Only God's Truth will last, and it will gain the mastery in the end. If there is defeat, we must not be dejected, lose heart, or give up the struggle. Faith means hope, activity, striving steadfastly on to the goal.

457. These general considerations apply in particular to the disaster at Uhud. (1) In a fight for truth, if you are hurt, be sure the adversary has suffered hurt also, the more so as he has no faith to sustain him. (2) Success or failure in this world comes to all at varying times : we must not grumble, as we do not see the whole of God's Plan. (3) Men's true mettle is known in adversity as gold is assayed in fire ; Cf. also iii, 154, last note. (4) Martyrdom is in itself an honour and a privilege : how glorious is the fame of Hamza the Martyr, and in later times, of Hasan and Husain ? (5) If there is any cross in us, it will be purified by resistance and struggle. (6) When evil is given rope a little, it works out its own destruction : the orgies of cruelty indulged in by the Pagans after what they supposed to be their victory at Uhud filled up their cup of iniquity ; it lost them the support and adherence of the best in their own ranks, and hastened the destruction of Paganism from Arabia. Cf. iii, 127 and n. 448.

141. God's object also is to purge ⁴⁵⁸
Those that are true in Faith
And to deprive of blessing
Those that resist Faith.

۱۴۱- وَلِيْمَخْصَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَيَمْحَقَ الْكَافِرِينَ ۝

142. Did ye think that ye
Would enter Heaven ⁴⁵⁹
Without God testing
Those of you who fought hard
(In His Cause) and
Remained steadfast ?

۱۴۲- أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ
وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ
وَيَعْلَمِ الصَّابِرِينَ ۝

143. Ye did indeed
Wish for Death
Before ye met him :
Now ye have seen him
With your own eyes,
(And ye flinch !)

۱۴۳- وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ
مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَلْقَوْهُ ۖ
فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمُوهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ۝

SECTION 15.

144. Muhammad is no more ⁴⁶⁰
Than an Apostle : many
Were the Apostles that passed
away
Before him. If he died
Or was slain, will ye then
Turn back on your heels ?
If any did turn back
On his heels, not the least
Harm will he do to God ;
But God (on the other hand)
Will swiftly reward those
Who (serve him) with gratitude.

۱۴۴- وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ
قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَلَا يَنْفَكُ
أَوْ قَتِلَ
انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ
وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ
فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا
وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ ۝

145. Nor can a soul die
Except by God's leave,

۱۴۵- وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

458. The purge or purification was in two senses. (1) It cleared out the Hypocrites from the ranks of the Muslim warriors. (2) The testing-time strengthened the faith of the weak and wavering ; for suffering has its own mission in life. The Apostle's example—wounded but staunch, and firmer than ever—put new life into the Community.

459. Cf. ii. 214.

460. This verse primarily applies to the battle of Uhud, in the course of which a cry was raised that the Apostle was slain. He had indeed been severely wounded, but Talha, Abū Bakr, and 'Alī were at his side, and his own unexampled bravery saved the Muslim army from a rout. This verse was recalled again by Abū Bakr when the Apostle actually died a natural death eight years later, to remind people that God, Whose Message he brought, lives for ever. And we have need to remember this now and often for two reasons : (1) when we feel inclined to pay more than human honour to one who was the truest, the purest, and the greatest of men, and thus in a sense to compound for our forgetting the spirit of his teaching, and (2) when we feel depressed at the chances and changes of time, and forget that the eternal God lives and watches over us and over all His creatures now as in all history in the past and in the future.

The term being fixed
As by writing. If any
Do desire a reward
In this life, We shall give it ⁴⁶¹
To him ; and if any
Do desire a reward
In the Hereafter, We shall
Give it to him.
And swiftly shall We reward
Those that (serve us with)
gratitude.

146. How many of the Prophets
Fought (in God's way),
And with them (fought)
Large bands of godly men ?
But they never lost heart
If they met with disaster
In God's way, nor did
They weaken (in will)
Nor give in. For God
Loves those who are
Firm and steadfast.

147. All that they said was :
"Our Lord ! forgive us
Our sins and anything
We may have done
That transgressed our duty :
Establish our feet firmly,
And help us against
This people that resisteth
Faith."

148. And God gave them
A reward in this world,
And the excellent reward
Of the Hereafter. For God
Loveth those who do good.

كِتَابًا مُؤَجَّلًا
وَمَنْ يُرِدْ
ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا
وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ
نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا
وَسَنَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ ○

١٣٦- وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ نَبِيِّ قُتِلَ مَعَهُ
رِجَالٌ كَثِيرٌ مِمَّا وَهَبُوا
بِمَا آصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَمَا ضَعُفُوا
وَمَا اسْتَكْبَرُوا
وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ ○

١٣٧- وَمَا كَانَ ثَوَابُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا
رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا
ذُنُوبَنَا وَاسْرِفْنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا
وَتُبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا
وَالضَّرَرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ○

١٣٨- فَأَنشَأَ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحَسَنَّ
ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۞

C. 59.—Uḥud showed how dangerous it was

(iii. 149-180.) To lend ear to enemy suggestions,
To disobey orders, dispute, lose courage,
Or seek selfish ends; some even followed

461. There is a slight touch of irony in this. As applied to the archers at Uḥud, who deserted their posts for the sake of plunder, they might have got some plunder, but they put themselves and the whole of their army into jeopardy. For a little worldly gain, they nearly lost their souls. On the other hand, those who took the long view and fought with staunchness and discipline,—their reward was swift and sure. If they died, they got the crown of martyrdom. If they lived, they were heroes honoured in this life and the next.

The evil course of turning back.
 But great is God's mercy: where He helps,
 No harm can come. Trust your Leader.
 The Hypocrites, in withdrawing from battle,
 Were really helping the Unbelievers,
 But glorious were those who knew
 No fear: those killed in the Cause of God
 Yet live and thrive and do rejoice;
 And never can those who fight against Faith
 Hurt in the least the Cause of God.

SECTION 16.

149. **Q**h ye who believe!
 If ye obey the Unbelievers,
 They will drive you back
 On your heels, and ye
 Will turn back (from Faith)
 To your own loss.
150. Nay, God is your Protector,
 And He is the best of helpers.
151. Soon shall We cast terror
 Into the hearts of the Unbelievers,
 For that they joined companions
 With God, for which He had sent
 No authority: their abode
 Will be the Fire: and evil
 Is the home of the wrong-doers!
152. God did indeed fulfil
 His promise to you
 When ye with His permission
 Were about to annihilate
 Your enemy,—until ye flinched
 And fell to disputing
 About the order.⁴⁶²
 And disobeyed it
 After He brought you in sight
 (Of the Booty) which ye covet.
 Among you are some
 That hanker after this world
 And some that desire
 The Hereafter. Then did He

١٤٩- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا يُرِيدُوا عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ
 فَتَنَقَّلُوا خَصِرِينَ ○

١٥٠- بَلَىٰ اللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۖ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ ○

١٥١- سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ
 بِمَا أُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ
 مَا لَهُمْ يَنْزِلُ بِهِ سُلْطَانٌ ۖ وَمَأْوَهُمُ النَّارُ
 وَبِئْسَ مَوْسَىٰ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

١٥٢- وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ
 تَحْسَبُونَهُمْ بِأَذَىٰ ۖ هَٰذَا هُوَ
 وَتَنَادَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ
 وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَرَاكُمْ
 مَتَابِعًا ○

وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا
 وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ۖ

462. The order was: not to run after booty, but strictly to maintain discipline. Uhud was in the beginning a victory for the Muslims. Many of the enemy were slain, and they were retiring when a part of the Muslims, against orders, ran in pursuit, attracted by the prospects of booty. See note to iii. 121.

Divert you from your foes
In order to test you.⁴⁶³
But He forgave you:
For God is full of grace
To those who believe.

153. Behold | ye climbed up
The high ground, without even
Casting a side glance
At any one, and the Apostle
In the rear was calling you
Back. There did God give you
One distress after another
By way of requital,⁴⁶⁴
To teach you not to grieve
For (the booty) that had escaped
you
And for (the ill) that had befallen
you.
For God is well aware
Of all that ye do.

154. After (the excitement)
Of the distress, He sent down
Calm on a band of you
Overcome with slumber,⁴⁶⁵
While another band
Was stirred to anxiety
By their own feelings,
Moved by wrong suspicions
Of God—suspicions due
To Ignorance. They said:
"What affair is this of ours?"⁴⁶⁶
Say thou: "Indeed, this affair

ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمْ
عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ○

١٥٣- إِذْ تَصْعَدُونَ
وَلَا تُلْقُونَ عَلَى أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ
يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أُخْرَاكُمْ
فَأَنَابَكُمْ عَنْهُ فَبِغْوَ
يَكِيدَ لَا تَخْرُجُوا
عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ
وَلَا مَا آصَابَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ غَفِيرٌ رَحِيمٌ ○

١٥٤- ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ
أَمْنًا نُعَاسًا فَيُعْطِي سَلَابَةً مِنْكُمْ
وَالطَّائِفَةُ قَدْ أَهْمَتَهُمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ
يُظَنُّونَ يَا اللَّهُ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنُّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ
يَقُولُونَ هَلْ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ

463. The disobedience seemed at first pleasant: they were chasing the enemy, and there was the prospect of booty. But when the gap was noticed by the enemy, they turned the flank round the hill and nearly overwhelmed the Muslims. Had it not been for God's grace, and the firmness of their Leader and his immediate Companions, they would have been finished.

464. It would seem that a party of horsemen led by the dashing Khalid ibn Walid came through the gap in the passes where the Muslim archers should have been, and in the confusion that arose, the retreating foe rallied and turned back on the Muslims. From the low ground on the bank of the Nullah the Muslims retreated in their turn and tried to gain the hill. They had a double loss: (1) they were baulked of the booty they had run after, and (2) their own lives and the lives of their whole army were in danger, and many lives were actually lost from their ranks. Their own lives being in danger, they had hardly time to grieve for the loss of booty or the general calamity. But it steadied them, and some of them stood the test.

465. After the first surprise, when the enemy turned on them, a great part of the Muslims did their best, and seeing their mettle, the enemy withdrew to his camp. There was a lull; the wounded had rest: those who had fought the hard fight were visited by kindly Sleep, sweet Nature's nurse. In contrast to them was the band of Hypocrites, whose behaviour is described in the next note.

466. The Hypocrites withdrew from the fighting. Apparently they had been among those who had been counselling the defence of Medina within the walls instead of boldly coming out to meet the enemy. Their distress was caused by their own mental state: the sleep of the just was denied them: and they continued to murmur of what might have been. Only fools do so; wise men face actualities.

Is wholly God's." They hide
In their minds what they
Dare not reveal to thee.
They say (to themselves):
"If we had had anything
To do with this affair,
We should not have been
In the slaughter here."
Say: "Even if you had remained
In your homes, those
For whom death was decreed
Would certainly have gone forth
To the place of their death;
But (all this was) ⁴⁶⁷
That God might test
What is in your breasts
And purge what is
In your hearts.
For God knoweth well
The secrets of your hearts.

155. Those of you ⁴⁶⁸
Who turned back
On the day the two hosts
Met,—it was Satan
Who caused them to fail,
Because of some (evil)
They had done. God
Has blotted out (their fault):
For God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Forbearing.

SECTION 17.

156. **O**h ye who believe!
Be not like the Unbelievers,
Who say of their brethren,
When they are travelling
Through the earth or engaged
In fighting: "If they had stayed
With us, they would not
Have died, or been slain."

كَلَّا اللَّهُ يُخْفُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ
مَا لَا يُبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ
لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ
مَا قُتِلْنَا هَاهُنَا قُلْ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ
فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ
لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْقَتْلُ إِلَى مَضَاجِعِهِمْ
وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ
وَلِيُخَيِّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

١٥٥- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى
الْجَمْعَيْنِ إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ
بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا
وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

١٥٦- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا وَقَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ
إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانُوا غُرَى
لَوْ كَانُوا عِنْدَنَا مَا مَاتُوا وَمَا قُتِلُوا

467. That testing by God is not in order that it may add to His knowledge, for He knows all. It is in order to help us subjectively, to mould our will, and purge us of any grosser motives, that will be searched out by calamity. If it is a hardened sinner, the test brings conviction out of his own self. Cf. also iii, 140.

468. It was the duty of all who were able to fight, to fight in the sacred cause at Uhud. But a small section were timid: they were not quite as bad as those who rallied against God, or those who thoughtlessly disobeyed orders. But they still failed in their duty. It is our inner motives that God regards. These timorous people were forgiven by God. Perhaps they were given another chance: perhaps they rose to it and did their duty then.

This that God may make it
A cause of sighs and regrets
In their hearts. It is God
That gives Life and Death,⁴⁶⁹
And God sees well
All that ye do.

لِيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ حَسْرَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ يَخْبُرُ وَيُبَيِّنُ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ٥

157. And if ye are slain, or die,
In the way of God,
Forgiveness and mercy
From God are far better
Than all they could amass.⁴⁷⁰

۱۵۷- وَلَئِنْ قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
أَوْ مِتُّمْ لَیَغْفُرَنَّ اللَّهُ
وَرَحْمَةً خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ٥

158. And if ye die, or are slain,
Lo! it is unto God
That ye are brought together.

۱۵۸- وَلَئِنْ مِتُّمْ أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ
لَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تُجْمَعُونَ ٥

159. It is part of the Mercy
Of God that thou dost deal
Gently with them.⁴⁷¹
Wert thou severe
Or harsh-hearted,
They would have broken away
From thee: so pass over
(Their faults), and ask
For God's forgiveness
For them; and consult
Them in affairs (of moment).
Then, when thou hast
Taken a decision,
Put thy trust in God.

۱۵۹- فَمَا رَحْمَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ لَئِنْ لَمْ
تَكُنْ أَتَقَطُّ عَلَى الْقَلْبِ
لَا تَقْطَعُوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ
فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ
وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ
وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ
فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ٥

469. It is want of faith that makes people afraid (1) of meeting death, (2) of doing their duty when it involves danger, as in travelling in order to earn an honest living, or fighting in a sacred cause. Such fear is part of the punishment for want of faith. If you have faith, there is no fear in meeting death, for it brings you nearer to your goal, nor in meeting danger for a sufficient cause, because you know that the keys of life and death are in God's hands. Nothing can happen without God's Will. If it is God's Will that you should die, your staying at home will not save you. If it is His Will that you should live, the danger you incur in a just cause brings you glory. Supposing it is His Will that you should lose your life in the danger, there are three considerations that would make you eager to meet it: (1) dying in doing your duty is the best means of reaching God's Mercy; (2) the man of faith knows that he is not going to an unknown country of which he has no news; he is going nearer to God; and (3) he is being "brought together" unto God; i.e., he will meet all his dear ones in faith: instead of the separation which the souls without faith fear, he looks forward to a surer reunion than is possible in this life.

470. Notice a beautiful little literary touch here. At first sight you would expect the second person here ("you could amass"), to match the second person in the earlier clause. But remember that the second person in earlier clause refers to the man of faith, and the third person in the last line refers to the Unbelievers; as if it said: "Of course you as a man of faith would not be for hoarding riches: your wealth,—duty and the mercy of God,—is far more precious than anything the Unbelievers can amass in their selfish lives."

471. The extremely gentle nature of Muhammad endeared him to all, and it is reckoned as one of the Mercies of God. One of the Apostle's titles is "A Mercy to all Creation." At no time was this gentleness, this mercy, this long-suffering with human weaknesses, more valuable than after a disaster like that at Uhud. It is a God-like quality, which then, as always, bound and binds the souls of countless men to him.

For God loves those
Who put their trust (in Him).

160. If God helps you,
None can overcome you :
If He forsakes you,
Who is there, after that,
That can help you ?
In God, then,
Let Believers put their trust.

161. No prophet could (ever) ⁴⁷²
Be false to his trust.
If any person is so false,
He shall, on the Day
Of judgment, restore
What he misappropriated ;
Then shall every soul
Receive its due,—
Whatever it earned, —
And none shall be
Dealt with unjustly.

162. Is the man who follows
The good pleasure of God
Like the man who draws
On himself the wrath
Of God, and whose abode
Is in Hell ? —
A woeful refuge !

163. They are in varying grades
In the sight of God,
And God sees well
All that they do.

164. God did confer
A great favour

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ○

١٦٠- إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ
وَإِنْ يَخْذَلْكُمْ
فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ○

١٦١- وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَغُلَّ
وَمَنْ يَغْلُلْ
يَأْتِ بِمَا غَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ
ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ
وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ○

١٦٢- أَفَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانُ اللَّهِ
كَمَنْ بَاءَ بِسَخَطِ اللَّهِ
وَمَا أَوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ
وَبِئْسَ النُّصِيرُ ○

١٦٣- هُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ بِوَعْدِهِ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ○

١٦٤- لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ

472. Besides the gentleness of his nature, Muṣṭafā was known from his earliest life for his trustworthiness. Hence his title of *Al-Amīn*. Unscrupulous people often read their own low motives into other men, and their accusation, which is meant to injure, fastens on the various virtues for which the man they attack is well known. Some of the Hypocrites after Uhud raised some doubts about the division of the spoils, thinking to sow the seeds of poison in the hearts of the men who had deserted their posts in their craving for booty. Those low suspicions were never believed in by any sensible people, and they have no interest for us now. But the general principles here declared are of eternal value. (1) Men of God do not act from unworthy motives. (2) Those who act from such motives are spiritually the lowest of creatures, and they will make no profit. (3) A man of God is not to be judged by the same standard as a greedy creature. (4) In God's eyes there are various grades of men, and we must try to understand and appreciate such grades. If we trust our Leader, we shall not question his honesty without cause. If he is dishonest, he is not fit to be a leader.

On the Believers⁴⁷³
When He sent among them
An Apostle from among
Themselves, rehearsing
Unto them the Signs
Of God, sanctifying them,
And instructing them
In Scripture and Wisdom,
While, before that,
They had been
In manifest error.

165. **What!** When a single
Disaster smites you,
Although ye smote (your enemies)
With one twice as great,
Do ye say?—
"Whence is this?"
Say (to them):
"It is from yourselves:
For God hath power
Over all things."⁴⁷⁴

166. What ye suffered
On the day the two armies
Met, was with the leave
Of God, in order that
He might test⁴⁷⁵ the Believers,—

167. And the Hypocrites also.⁴⁷⁶
These were told: "Come,
Fight in the way of God,
Or (at least) drive
(The foe from your city)."
They said: "Had we known
How to fight, we should
Certainly have followed you."

كُلِّى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ
رُسُلًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ
وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَلَوْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ
لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ۝

١٦٥- أَوَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ مِصْبَةٌ
فَقَدْ أَصَابَتْكُمْ وَفَلَّيْهَا
فَلْتُمْ أَنَّى هَذَا
قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝

١٦٦- وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ
فِي بَادِيِ اللَّهِ
وَلِيَعْلَمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

١٦٧- وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ
تَعَالَوْا فَاغْلُظْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
أَوْ ادْفَعُوا
قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا لَدِ الْبَعْثِكُمْ

473. Cf. ii. 151.

474. If Uhud was a reverse to the Muslims, they had inflicted a reverse twice as great on the Meccans at Badr. This reverse was not without God's permission for He wanted to test and purify the faith of those who followed Islam, and to show them that they must strive and do all in their power to deserve God's help. If they disobeyed orders and neglected discipline, they must attribute the disaster to themselves and not to God.

475. Test: literally *know*. See the last note to iii, 154.

476. The testing of the Hypocrites was the searching out of their motives and exposing them to the sight of their brethren, who might otherwise have been taken in. In the first place they gave counsels of caution: in their minds it was nothing but cowardice. In the second place, what they wished was not the good of the community but its being placed in a contemptible position. When others were for self-sacrifice, they were for ease and fair words. Pretending to be Muslims, they were nearer to Unbelief. Ironically they pretended to know nothing of fighting, and left their devout brethren to defend their faith and ideals. If that devout spirit did not appeal to them, they might at least have defended their city of Medina when it was threatened,—defended their hearths and homes as good citizens.

They were that day
Nearer to Unbelief
Than to Faith,
Saying with their lips
What was not in their hearts.
But God hath full knowledge
Of all they conceal.

168. They are the ones that say,
(Of their brethren slain),
While they themselves
Sit (at ease): "If only
They had listened to us,
They would not have been slain."
Say: "Avert death
From your own selves,
If ye speak the truth."

169. Think not of those
Who are slain in God's way
As dead. Nay, they live,⁴⁷⁷
Finding their sustenance
In the Presence of their Lord ;

170. They rejoice in the Bounty
Provided by God :
And with regard to those
Left behind, who have not
Yet joined them (in their bliss),
The (Martyrs) glory in the fact
That on them is no fear,
Nor have they cause to grieve.⁴⁷⁸

171. They glory in the Grace
And the Bounty from God,
And in the fact that
God suffereth not

هُمْ بِالْكَفْرِ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ
يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ
مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ۝

١٦٨- الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ
وَقَعَدُوا لَهُمْ لَأُطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا
قُلْ فَإِنَّ دَرْدَكُمْ أَعُنْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ الْوَيْتُ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۝

١٦٩- وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا
بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ۝

١٧٠- فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَلَيْسَتِ بُشُرُوكُمْ
بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ
أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ۝

١٧١- لَيْسَتِ بُشُرُوكُمْ بِغَضَاةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلُ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ

477. A beautiful passage about the Martyrs in the cause of Truth. They are not dead: they live,—and in a far higher and deeper sense than in the life they have left. Even those who have no faith in the Hereafter honour those that die in their cause, with the crown of immortality in the minds and memories of generations unborn. But in Faith we see a higher, truer, and less relative immortality. Perhaps "immortality" is not the right word in this connection, as it implies a continuation of this life. In their case, through the gateway of death, they enter the true real Life, as opposed to its shadow here. Our carnal life is sustained with carnal food, and its joys and pleasures at their best are those which are projected on the screen of this material world. Their real Life is sustained from the ineffable Presence and Nearness of God. Cf. ii. 154, and see how the idea is further developed here.

478. The Martyrs not only rejoice at the bliss they have themselves attained. The dear ones left behind are in their thoughts: it is part of their glory that they have saved their dear ones from fear, sorrow, humiliation, and grief, in this life, even before they come to share in the glories of the Hereafter.

Note how the refrain: "on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve": comes in here with a new and appropriate meaning. Besides other things, it means that the dear ones have no cause to grieve at the death of the Martyrs; rather have they cause to rejoice.

The reward of the Faithful
To be lost (in the least).

SECTION 18.

172. **Of** those who answered
The call of God
And the Apostle,
Even after being wounded,⁴⁷⁹
Those who do right
And refrain from wrong
Have a great reward ;—

173. Men said to them :
" A great army is gathering
Against you " :
And frightened them :
But it only increased
Their Faith : they said :
" For us God sufficeth,
And He is the best
Disposer of affairs."

174. And they returned
With Grace and Bounty
From God : no harm
Ever touched them :
For they followed
The good pleasure of God :
And God is the Lord
Of bounties unbounded.

175. **It** is only the Evil One
That suggests to you
The fear of his votaries :
Be ye not afraid
Of them, but fear Me,
If ye have Faith.

176. Let not those grieve thee
Who rush headlong
Into Unbelief :
Not the least harm
Will they do to God :
In God's Plan

لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

۱۷۲- الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْصَةُ
لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقُوا
أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝

۱۷۳- الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لَهُمُ التَّلَاسُ
إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ
فَاخْشَوْهُمْ
فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا ۝
وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ۝

۱۷۴- فَأَنْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ
لَمْ يَمَسَّ لَهُمْ سُوءٌ ۝
وَاتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝

۱۷۵- إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ ۝
فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ
وَخَافُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

۱۷۶- وَلَا يَحْزُنكَ الَّذِينَ يَسَارِعُونَ فِي
الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَنَبْظُرُوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا
يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ

479. After the confusion at Uhud, men rallied round the Apostle. He was wounded, and they were wounded, but they were all ready to fight again. Abū Sufyān with his Meccans withdrew, but left a challenge with them to meet him and his army again at the fair of Badr Sughr next year. The challenge was accepted, and a picked band of Muslims under their intrepid Leader kept the tryst, but the enemy did not come. They returned, not only unharmed, but enriched by the trade at the fair, and (it may be presumed) strengthened by the accession of new adherents to their cause.

They will have no portion
In the Hereafter,
But a severe punishment.

177. Those who purchase
Unbelief at the price
Of faith,—
Not the least harm
Will they do to God,
But they will have
A grievous punishment.

178. Let not the Unbelievers
Think that Our respite
To them is good for themselves :
We grant them respite
That they may grow ⁴⁸⁰
In their iniquity :
But they will have
A shameful punishment.

179. **G**od will not leave
The Believers in the state
In which ye are now,
Until He separates
What is evil
From what is good.⁴⁸¹
Nor will He disclose
To you the secrets
Of the Unseen,⁴⁸²
But He chooses
Of His Apostles
(For the purpose)
Whom He pleases.
So believe in God
And His Apostles :
And if ye believe
And do right,
Ye have a reward
Without measure.

الَّذِينَ يَبْتِغُونَ لَهُمُ الْحَظَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝

۱۷۷- إِنْ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا
الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ
لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝

۱۷۸- وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
أَنَّمَا نُكَلِّمُهُمْ خَيْرٌ ۚ لَّا نُفَسِّرُهُمْ
إِنَّمَا نُكَلِّمُهُمْ لِيُذْذُوا وَإِنَّمَا
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ۝

۱۷۹- مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُتُؤَمِّنِينَ
عَلَىٰ مَا أَنتُمْ عَلَيْهِ
حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ الْخَيْرَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ
وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ
لِيُظْهِرَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُخْتِئُ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الرُّسُلُ
وَأِنْ تُلَاقُوا
وَتَتَّقُوا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝

480. That the cup of their iniquity may be full. The appetite for sin grows with what it feeds on. The natural result is that the sinner sinks deeper into sin. If there is any freedom of will, this naturally follows, though God's Grace is always ready for the repentant. If the Grace is rejected, the increase of iniquity makes the nature of iniquity plainer to those who might otherwise be attracted by its glitter. The working of God's Law is therefore both just and merciful. See also the next verse.

481. The testing of good men by calamities and evil men by leaving them in the enjoyment of good things is part of the Universal Plan, in which some freedom of choice is left to man. The psychological and subjective test is unfailing, and the separation is effected partly by the operation of the human wills, to which some freedom is allowed. But it must be effected, if only in the interests of the good.

482. Man in his weak state would be most miserable if he could see the secrets of the Future or the secrets of the Unseen. But things are revealed to him from time to time as may be expedient for him, by Apostles chosen for the purpose. Our duty is to hold fast by faith and lead a good life.

180. And let not those
Who covetously withhold
Of the gifts which God
Hath given them of His Grace,⁴⁸³
Think that it is good for them :
Soon shall the things
Which they covetously withheld
Be tied to their necks
Like a twisted collar,⁴⁸⁴
On the Day of Judgment.
To God belongs the heritage⁴⁸⁵
Of the heavens and the earth ;
And God is well-acquainted
With all that ye do.

١٨٠- وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ
يَتَّخِلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
هُوَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ
بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ
مَا بَلَغُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
وَاللَّهُ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ۝

C. 60.—Regard, unmoved, the taunts of those
(*Gift. 181-200.*) Who laugh at faith ; nor let their falsehood
Nor their seeming prosperity, raise
Questions in your minds. All
Who can read the Signs of God in Nature
Know His wisdom, goodness, power,
And justice. They know His promise
Is sure, and in humble prayer,
Wholly put their trust in Him.

SECTION 19.

181. God hath heard
The taunt of those
Who say : " Then God ⁴⁸⁶
Is indigent and we
Are rich ! "—We shall
Certainly record their word

١٨١- لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ
قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ
وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا

483. The gifts are of all kinds : material gifts, such as wealth, property, strength of limbs, etc., or intangible gifts, such as influence, birth in a given set, intellect, skill, insight, etc., or spiritual gifts of the highest kind. The spending of all these things (apart from what is necessary for ourselves) for those who need them, is charity, and purifies our own character. The withholding of them (apart from our needs) is similarly greed and selfishness, and is strongly condemned.

484. By an apt metaphor the miser is told that his wealth or the other gifts which he hoarded will cling round his neck and do him no good. He will wish he could get rid of them, but he will not be able to do so. According to the Biblical phrase in another connection they will hang like a millstone round his neck (*Matt. xviii. 6*). The metaphor here is fuller. He hugged his wealth or his gifts about him. They will become like a heavy collar, the badge of slavery, round his neck. They will be tied tight and twisted, and they will give him pain and anguish instead of pleasure. C. also xvii. 13.

485. Another metaphor is now introduced. Material wealth or property is only called ours during our short life here : it then descends to heirs and heirs until it goes to the ultimate heir, the State. So all gifts are ours in trust only ; they ultimately revert to God, to Whom belongs all that is in the heavens or on earth.

486. In ii. 245 we read : " Who is he that will loan to God a beautiful loan ? " In other places charity or spending in the way of God is metaphorically described as giving to God. The holy Apostle often used that expression in appealing for funds to be spent in the way of God. The scoffers mocked and said : " So God is indigent and we are rich ! " This blasphemy was of a piece with all their conduct in history, in slaying the Prophets and men of God.

And (their act) of slaying
The Prophets in defiance⁴⁸⁷
Of right, and We shall say:
"Taste ye the Penalty
Of the Scorching Fire!"

182. This is because
Of their (unrighteous deeds)
Which their hands
Sent on before them :⁴⁸⁸
For God never harms
Those who serve Him.

183. They (also) said : " God took
Our promise not to believe
In a prophet unless
He showed us a sacrifice
Consumed by fire⁴⁸⁹
(From heaven)." Say :
" There came to you
Prophets before me,
With Clear Signs
And even with what
Ye ask for : why then
Did ye slay them,
If ye speak the truth ? "

184. And if they reject thee,
So were rejected Apostles
Before thee, who came
With Clear Signs,
Books of dark prophecies,
And the Book of
Enlightenment.⁴⁹⁰

وَقَتْلَهُمُ الرُّسُلَ
يُغَيِّرُ حَتَّى
وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ

۱۸۲- ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
لَيْسَ بِظَالَمٍ لِلْعَمِيدِ

۱۸۳- الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
أَلَّا نُرْصِنَ لِرَسُولٍ
حَتَّى يَأْتِينَا بَقُرْبَانٍ تَأْكُلُهُ النَّارُ
قُلْ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ قَبْلِي
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَإِلَّا لَكُنَّ
فَلَمَّا قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

۱۸۴- فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ
مِنْ قَبْلِكَ جَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَالزُّبُرِ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ

487. For the expression "slaying in defiance of right," Cf. iii. 21 and iii. 112.

488. Cf. ii. 95 and note.

489. Burnt sacrifices figured in the Mosaic Law, and in the religious ceremonies long before Moses, but it is not true that the Mosaic Law laid down a fire from heaven on a burnt sacrifice as a test of the credentials of Prophets. Even if it had been so, did the Jews obey the Prophets who showed this Sign? In Leviticus ix. 23-24, we are told of a burnt offering prepared by Moses and Aaron : " and there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat." Yet the people rebelled frequently against Moses, and rebellion against a Prophet is spiritually an attempt to kill him. Abel's offering (sacrifice) was probably a burnt offering : it was accepted by God, and he was killed by Cain out of jealousy : Gen. iv. 3-8. Mosaic sacrifices were no longer needed by the people of Jesus or the people of Muhammad.

490. The three things mentioned in the Text are : (1) Clear Signs (*baiyināt*) ; (2) *zabur*, and (3) *kitāb-ul-Munir*. The signification of (1) I have explained in the note to iii. 62, as far as they relate to Jesus. In a more general sense, it means the clear evidence which God's dealings furnish about a man of God having a true mission ; e. g., Moses in relation to Pharaoh. I have translated (2) as Books of Dark Prophecies, as the root *zabara* implies something hard. The Commentators are not agreed, but the Prophetic writings which seemed to contemporaries difficult to understand may well come under this description. David's Psalms (*Zabūr*, iv. 163) may also come under this description. As to (3), there is no doubt about the literal meaning of the words, "the Book of Enlightenment". But what does it precisely refer to? I take it to mean the fundamental guide to conduct, — the clear rules laid down in all Dispensations to help men to lead good lives.

185. Every soul shall have
A taste of death : ⁴⁹¹
And only on the Day
Of Judgment shall you
Be paid your full recompense.
Only he who is saved
Far from the Fire
And admitted to the Garden
Will have attained
The object (of Life) :
For the life of this world
Is but goods and chattels
Of deception. ⁴⁹²

186. Ye shall certainly
Be tried and tested
In your possessions
And in your personal selves; ⁴⁹³
And ye shall certainly
Hear much that will grieve you,
From those who received
The Book before you
And from those who
Worship many gods.
But if ye persevere
Patiently, and guard
Against evil,—then
That will be
A determining factor
In all affairs.

187. And remember
God took a Covenant
From the People of the Book, ⁴⁹⁴
To make it known
And clear to mankind,
And not to hide it ;

١٨٥- كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ
وَأِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ أَجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
فَمَنْ زُجِرَ عَنْ التَّلَا
وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ
وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا
إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ ○

١٨٦- لَنُبَلِّغَنَّكُمْ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ
وَلَنَسْمَعَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ
أَشْرَكُوا أَذَى كَثِيرًا
وَلَن تَصِيرُوا
وَتَتَّقُوا
فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْأُمُورِ ○

١٨٧- وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
لَتَعْبُدُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْفُرُونَ

491. The soul will not die : but the death of the body will give a taste of death to the soul when the soul separates from the body. The soul will then know that this life was but a probation. And seeming inequalities will be adjusted finally on the Day of Judgment.

492. Cf. Longfellow's Psalm of Life : " All this world's a fleeting show, For man's illusion given." The only Reality will be when we have attained our final goal.

493. Not wealth and possessions only (or want of them), are the means of our trial. All our personal talents, knowledge, opportunities, and their opposites,—in fact everything that happens to us and makes up our personality is a means of our testing. So is our Faith : we shall have to put up for it many insults from those who do not share it

494. Truth—God's Message—comes to any man or nation as a matter of sacred trust. It should be broadcast and published and taught and made clear to all within reach. Privileged priesthood at once erects a barrier. But worse,—when such priesthood tampers with the truth, taking what suits it and ignoring the rest, it has sold God's gift for a miserable ephemeral profit ; how miserable, it will learn when Nemesis comes,

But they threw it away
Behind their backs,⁴⁹⁵
And purchased with it
Some miserable gain!
And vile was the bargain
They made!

فَنَبَذُوهُ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ
وَاشْتَرَوْا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
فَبُئْسَ مَا يَشْتَرُونَ ○

188. Think not that those
Who exult in what they
Have brought about, and love
To be praised for what
They have not done,—⁴⁹⁶
Think not that they
Can escape the Penalty.
For them is a Penalty
Grievous indeed.

۱۸۸- لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أَتَوْا
وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا
بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسَبْهُمْ
بِمَقَالَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ○

189. To God belongeth
The dominion
Of the heavens
And the earth;
And God hath power
Over all things.

۱۸۹- وَلِلَّهِ
مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝

SECTION 20.

190. Behold! In the creation
Of the heavens and earth,
And the alternation
Of the Day and the Night,—⁴⁹⁷
There are indeed Signs
For men of understanding,—

۱۹۰- إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَإِخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۝

191. Men who celebrate
The praises of God,
Standing, sitting,
And lying down on their sides,⁴⁹⁸
And contemplate
The (wonders of) creation

۱۹۱- الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا
وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ
وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ

495. Cf. ii. 101.

496. A searching picture of the worldly wise! They may cause mischief and misery to others, but gloat over any glory it may bring them! They may trample down God's truths, and enthrone false standards of worship. They may take credit for virtues they do not possess and seeming successes that come in spite of their despicable deceptions!

497. See ii. 164. The two items mentioned here are just brief symbols recalling the six or seven mentioned in the other passage. And those too are but brief symbols and reminders of the glorious majesty of God and His goodness to man.

498. That is, in all postures, which again is symbolical of all circumstances, personal, social, economic, historical, and other,

In the heavens and earth,
(With the thought) :
" Our Lord ! not for naught
Hast Thou created (all) this !
Glory to Thee ! Give us ⁴⁹⁹
Salvation from the Penalty
Of the Fire.

192. " Our Lord ! any whom Thou
Dost admit to the Fire,
Truly Thou coverest with shame,
And never will wrong-doers
Find any helpers !

193. " Our Lord ! we have heard
The call of one calling
(Us) to Faith, ' Believe ye
In the Lord, ' and we
Have believed. Our Lord !
Forgive us our sins,
Blot out from us
Our iniquities, and take
To Thyself our souls
In the company of the righteous.

194. " Our Lord ! Grant us
What Thou didst promise
Unto us through Thine Apostles,
And save us from shame
On the Day of Judgment :
For Thou never breakest
Thy promise."

195. And their Lord accepted of them,
And answered them :
" Never will I suffer to be lost
The work of any of you,

الْهَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا
سُبْحَانَكَ
فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝

١٩٢- رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَنْ تَدْخُلُ النَّارَ
فَقَدْ أَخْزَيْتَهُ
وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ۝

١٩٣- رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا
مُنَادًا يَدْعُو إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ
أَنْ آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا
رَبَّنَا فَاعْفُ عَنَّا ذُنُوبَنَا
وَكُفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا
وَتَوَقَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ۝

١٩٤- رَبَّنَا وَإِنَّا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا
عَلَى رَسُولِكَ
وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْعَهْدَ ۝

١٩٥- فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ
عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ

499. It is the thought of Salvation that connects all these glories with man. Otherwise man would be a miserable, contemptible creature in these beauties and wonders of Nature. With his high destiny of Salvation he can be lifted even higher than these glories ! The Fire is a symbol of penalty. We pray for salvation from the penalty.

Be he male or female:
 Ye are members, one of
 another:⁵⁰⁰
 Those who have left their homes,
 Or been driven out therefrom,
 Or suffered harm in My Cause,
 Or fought or been slain,—
 Verily, I will blot out
 From them their iniquities,
 And admit them into Gardens
 With rivers flowing beneath;—
 A reward from the Presence⁵⁰¹
 Of God, and from His Presence
 Is the best of rewards."

196. Let not the strutting about
 Of the Unbelievers
 Through the land
 Deceive thee :

197. Little good is it (to them) :
 Their ultimate abode
 Is Hell: what a bed of misery !

198. For those who fear their Lord,
 Are Gardens, with rivers
 Flowing beneath; therein
 Are they to dwell (for ever),—
 A gift from the Presence
 Of God; and nearness
 To God is the best (bliss)
 For the righteous.

199. And there are,
 Among the People of the Book,

مِنْكُمْ مَنْ ذَكَرَ أَوْ أَنْشَىٰ
 بَعْضُكُمْ قَرْنًا بَعْضُ الْكَافِرِينَ هَاجَرُوا
 وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ
 وَأُؤْذُوا فِي سَبِيلِ
 وَقُتِلُوا وَقُتِلُوا
 لَا كُفْرَ عَنْهُمْ سِعَاتِهِمْ وَلَا دُخْلَ لَهُمْ
 جَنَّتِ بَحْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
 ثَوَابًا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
 وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ○

١٩٦- لَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ○

١٩٧- مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ
 وَبِئْسَ الْبِهَادُ ○

١٩٨- لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا لَهُمْ
 لَهُمْ جَنَّتِ بَحْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
 خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
 ثَوَابًا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
 وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ
 اتَّقَوْا ○

١٩٩- وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ

500. In Islam the equal status of the sexes is not only recognised but insisted on. If sex distinction which is a distinction in nature, does not count in spiritual matters, still less of course would count, artificial distinctions, such as rank, wealth, position, race, colour, birth, etc.

501. Here, and in v. 198 below, and in many places elsewhere, stress is laid on the fact that whatever gift, or reward, or bliss will come to the righteous, its chief merit will be that it proceeds from the Presence of God Himself. "Nearness to God" expresses it better than any other symbol.

Those who believe in God,
In the "revelation" to you,
And in the revelation to them,
Bowing in humility to God :
They will never sell
The Signs of God
For a miserable gain !
For them is a reward
With their Lord,
And God is swift in account.

200. Oh ye who believe !
Persevere in patience ⁵⁰²
And constancy ; vie
In such perseverance ;
Strengthen each other ;
And fear God ;
That ye may prosper. ⁵⁰³

لَسَنَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ
وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ
خَاشِعِينَ لِلّٰهِ لَا يَشْتُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللّٰهِ
شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا أَوْ كَثِيرًا لَّهُمْ
أُجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ○

۲۰۰- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا
وَصَابِرُوا
وَرَابِطُوا
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ۝



502. The full meaning of *Ṣabr* is to be understood here, viz. : Patience, perseverance, constancy, self-restraint, refusing to be cowed down. These virtues we are to exercise for ourselves and in relation to others ; we are to set an example, so that others may vie with us, and we are to vie with them, lest we fall short ; in this way we strengthen each other and bind our mutual relations closer, in our common service to God.

503. Prosperity (*faḥā*) here and in other passages is to be understood in a wide sense, including prosperity in our mundane affairs as well as in spiritual progress. In both cases it implies happiness and the attainment of our wishes, purified by the love of God.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA IV (*Nisāa*)

This Sūra is closely connected chronologically with Sūra III. Its subject-matter deals with the social problems which the Muslim community had to face immediately after Uḥud. While the particular occasion made the necessity urgent, the principles laid down have permanently governed Muslim Law and social practice.

Broadly speaking, the Sūra consists of two parts: (1) that dealing with women, orphans, inheritance, marriage, and family rights generally, and (2) that dealing with the recalcitrants in the larger family, the Community at Medina, *viz*, the Hypocrites and their accomplices.

It begins with an appeal to the solidarity of mankind, the rights of women and orphans, and the implications of family relationship, including an equitable distribution of property after death. (Vv. 1—14 and C. 61.)

While the decencies of family life should be enforced, women should be held in honour and their rights recognized, in marriage, property, and inheritance; and this principle of goodness should be extended to all beings, great and small. (Vv. 15—42, and C. 62.)

The sections in Medina, not yet in the Muslim community, should not go after false gods, but should accept the authority of the Apostle, and obey him. Then it will be their privilege to be admitted to a great and glorious Fellowship. (Vv. 43—70, and C. 63.)

The Believers should organize in self-defence against their enemies, and beware of the secret plots and mischiefs of the Hypocrites; how deserters should be treated. (Vv. 71—91, and C. 64.)

Caution about the taking of life; recommendations for leaving places inimical to Islam; religious duties in the midst of war. (Vv. 92—104, and C. 65.)

Treachery and the lure of evil. (Vv. 105—126, and C. 66.)

Women and orphans to be justly dealt with; Faith must go with justice, sincerity and moderation in speech. (Vv. 127—152, and C. 67.)

Where People of the Book went wrong, with honourable exceptions (Vv. 153—176, and C. 68.)

C. 61.—All mankind are one, and mutual rights
(iv. 1-14.) Must be respected: the sexes
Must honour, each the other;
Sacred are family relationships
That rise through marriage
And women bearing children;
Orphans need especial loving care;
In trust is held all property,
With duties well-defined;
And after death, due distribution
Should be made in equitable shares
To all whose affection, duty,
And trust shed light and joy
On this our life below,

Sura IV.

Nisaa, or The Women.

In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. O mankind ! reverence
Your Guardian-Lord,
Who created you
From a single Person,⁵⁰⁴
Created, of like nature,
His mate, and from them twain
Scattered (like seeds)
Countless men and women ;—
Reverence God, through Whom⁵⁰⁵
Ye demand your mutual (rights),
And (reverence) the wombs⁵⁰⁶
(That bore you) : for God
Ever watches over you.

۱- يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ
الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ
وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا
رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ
وَالرَّحَامَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

2. No orphans restore their
property
(When they reach their age),
Nor substitute (your) worthless
things
For (their) good ones ; and devour
not
Their substance (by mixing it up)⁵⁰⁷

۲- وَآتُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
وَلَا تَبْدِلُوا الْخَيْثُوكَ بِالطَّيِّبِ
وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَهُمْ

504. *Nafs* may mean: (1) soul; (2) self; (3) person, living person; (4) will, good pleasure, as in v. 4 below. *Minhā* : I follow the construction suggested by Imām Rāzī. The particle *min* would then suggest here not a portion or a source of something else, but a species, a nature, a similarity. The pronoun *hā* refers of course to *Nafs*. The Biblical story of the creation of Eve from a rib of Adam may be allegorical, but we need not assume it in Quranic teaching.

505. All our mutual rights and duties are referred to God. We are his creatures; His Will is the standard and measure of Good; and our duties are measured by our conformity with His Will. "Our wills are ours, to make them Thine," says Tennyson (In Memoriam). Among ourselves (human beings) our mutual rights and duties arise out of God's Law, the sense of Right that is implanted in us by him.

506. Among the most wonderful mysteries of our nature is that of sex. The unregenerate male is apt, in the pride of his physical strength, to forget the all-important part which the female plays in his very existence, and in all the social relationships that arise in our collective human lives. The mother that bore us must ever have our reverence. The wife, through whom we enter parentage, must have our reverence. Sex, which governs so much of our physical life, and has so much influence on our emotional and higher nature, deserves—not our fear, or our contempt, or our amused indulgence, but—our reverence in the highest sense of the term. With this fitting introduction we enter on a discussion of women, orphans, and family relationships.

507. Justice to orphans is enjoined, and three things are particularly mentioned as temptations in the way of a guardian: (1) He must not postpone restoring all his ward's property when the time comes; subject to v 5 below. (2) If there is a list of property, it is not enough that that list should be technically followed: the property restored must be of equal value to the property received: the same principle applies where there is no list. (3) If property is managed together, or where perishable goods must necessarily be consumed, the strictest probity is necessary when the separation takes place and this is insisted on. See also ii. 220 and note.

With your own. For this is
Indeed a great sin.

3. If ye fear that ye shall not
Be able to deal justly
With the orphans,⁵⁰⁸
Marry women of your choice,
Two, or three, or four ;
But if ye fear that ye shall not
Be able to deal justly (with them),
Then only one, or (a captive)
That your right hands possess.
That will be more suitable,
To prevent you
From doing injustice.⁵⁰⁹

4. And give the women
(On marriage) their dower
As a free gift ; but if they,
Of their own good pleasure,
Remit any part of it to you,
Take it and enjoy it
With right good cheer.

5. To those weak of
understanding⁵¹⁰
Make not over your property,⁵¹¹
Which God hath made
A means of support for you,
But feed and clothe them
Therewith, and speak to them
Words of kindness and justice.

إِلَى أَمْوَالِكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حُوبًا كَثِيرًا ۝

۝ وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَسْمَى
فَاتَّخِذُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ
مَثْنَى وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ ۚ
فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُعَدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً
أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ
ذَلِكَ أَذَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۝

۝ وَأَتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدُقَتِهِنَّ مَخْلَصًا
فَإِنْ طِبْنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ
مِّنْهُ نَفْسًا
فَاكْلُوهُ هَيْنًا مَّوْرِتًا ۝

۝ وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ
أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَمًا
وَأَرْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهَا وَاكْسُوهُمْ
وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ۝

508. Notice the conditional clause about orphans, introducing the rules about marriage. This reminds us of the immediate occasion of the promulgation of this verse. It was after Uhud, when the Muslim community was left with many orphans and widows, and some captives of war. Their treatment was to be governed by principles of the greatest humanity and equity. The occasion is past, but the principles remain. Marry the orphans if you are quite sure that you will in that way protect their interests and their property, with perfect justice to them and to your own dependants if you have any. If not, make other arrangements for the orphans.

509. The unrestricted number of wives of the "Times of Ignorance" was now strictly limited to a maximum of four, provided you could treat them with perfect equality, in material things as well as in affection and immaterial things. As this condition is most difficult to fulfil, I understand the recommendation to be towards monogamy.

510. This applies to orphans, but the wording is perfectly general, and defines principles like those of Chancery in English Law and the Court of Wards in Indian Law. Property has not only its rights but also its responsibilities. The owner may not do just what he likes absolutely; his right is limited by the good of the community of which he is a member, and if he is incapable of understanding it, his control should be removed. This does not mean that he is harshly dealt with. On the contrary his interests must be protected, and he must be treated with special kindness because of his incapacity.

511. Your property: Ultimately all property belongs to the Community, and is intended for the support of you, i.e., the community. It is held in trust by a particular individual. If he is incapable, he is put aside but gently and with kindness. While his incapacity remains, the duties and responsibilities devolve on his guardian even more strictly than in the case of the original owner; for he may not take any of the profits for himself unless he is poor, and in that case his remuneration for his trouble must be on a scale that is no more than just and reasonable.

6. **T**ake trial of orphans
Until they reach the age⁵¹²
Of marriage; if then ye find
Sound judgment in them,
Release their property to them;
But consume it not wastefully,
Nor in haste against their growing up.

If the guardian is well-off,
Let him claim no remuneration,
But if he is poor, let him
Have for himself what is
Just and reasonable.
When ye release their property
To them, take witnesses
In their presence :
But all-sufficient
Is God in taking account.⁵¹³

7. **F**rom what is left by parents
And those nearest related⁵¹⁴
There is a share for men
And a share for women,
Whether the property be small
Or large,—a determinate share.

8. But if at the time of division
Other relatives, or orphans,
Or poor, are present,
Give them something also,
And speak to them
Words of kindness and justice.

9. Let those (disposing of an estate)
Have the same fear in their minds
As they would have for their own
If they had left a helpless family
behind :
Let them fear God, and speak
Words of appropriate (comfort).⁵¹⁵

٤- وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ
فَإِنْ اُنْتَبَهُ مِنْهُمْ رُشْدًا
فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
وَلَا تَأْكُلُوهَا إِسْرَافًا وَبِدَارًا أَنْ يَكْبَرُوا
وَمَنْ كَانَ غَنِيًّا فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ
وَمَنْ كَانَ فَقِيرًا فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
فَإِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
فَشْهَدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
وَكُفَىٰ بِاللهِ حَسِيبًا ۝

٤- لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ
وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ
الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ
مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا ۝
٨- وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُو الْقُرْبَىٰ وَ
الْيَتَامَىٰ وَالسَّكِينِ فَارْزُقُوهُمْ مِنْهُ
وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ۝

٩- وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكَوْا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ
ذُرِّيَّةً ضِعَفًا خَالُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۝

512. The age of marriage is the age when they reach their majority.

513. It is good to take human witnesses when you faithfully discharge your trust; but remember that, however fully you satisfy your fellow-men when you give your account to them, there is a stricter account due from you to God. If you are righteous in God's eyes, you must follow these stricter standards.

514. I have resisted the temptation to translate "next of kin," as this phrase has a technical meaning in Indian Law, referring to certain kinds of heirs, whereas here the people meant are those whose inheritance is to be divided. The shares are specified. Here the general principles are laid down that females inherit as well as males, and that relatives who have no legal shares, orphans, and indigent people are not to be treated harshly, if present at the division.

515. It is a touching argument addressed to those who have to divide an estate. 'How anxious would you be if you had left a helpless family behind? If others do so, help and be kind.'

10. Those who unjustly
Eat up the property
Of orphans, eat up
A Fire into their own
Bodies : they will soon
Be enduring a blazing Fire!

SECTION 2.

11. God (thus) directs you
As regards your children's ⁵¹⁶
(Inheritance) : to the male,
A portion equal to that
Of two females : if only
Daughters, two or more, ⁵¹⁷
Their share is two-thirds
Of the inheritance;
If only one, her share
Is a half.

For parents, a sixth share
Of the inheritance to each,
If the deceased left children;
If no children, and the parents
Are the (only) heirs, the mother
Has a third; if the deceased
Left brothers (or sisters),
The mother has a sixth.
(The distribution in all cases
Is) after the payment
Of legacies and debts.
Ye know not whether
Your parents or your children
Are nearest to you
In benefit. These are
Settled portions ordained ⁵¹⁸

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَى ظُلْمًا
إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا
وَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا ۝

اَللّٰهُ يُوصِيكُمُ اللّٰهُ فِيْ اَوْلَادِكُمْ
لِلَّذِيْكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْاُنثٰى
فَاِنْ كُنَّ نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ
فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ ۚ وَاِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً
فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ وَلِابْنَيْهَا
لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا الشُّدُسُ
مِمَّا تَرَكَ اِنْ كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ ۚ وَاِنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ
وَلَدٌ وَارْتٰكَ اَبُوهُ فَلِاُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ
اِنْ كَانَ لَهُ اِخْوَةٌ
فَلِاُمِّهِ الشُّدُسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّاتِهِ
يُوصٰى بِهَا اَوْ دِيْنٌ
اَبَاؤُكُمْ وَاَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُوْنَ
اَللّٰهُ اَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعًا فَرِيضَةً

516. The principles of inheritance law are laid down in broad outline in the Qur'an; the precise details have been worked out on the basis of the Apostle's practice and that of his Companions, and by interpretation and analogy. Muslim jurists have collected a vast amount of learning on this subject, and this body of law is enough by itself to form the subject of life-long study. Here we shall deal only with the broad principles to be gathered from the Text, as interpreted by the Jurists.

(1) The power of testamentary disposition extends over only one-third of the Property; the remaining two-thirds are distributed among heirs as laid down. (2) All distribution takes place after the legacies and debts (including funeral expenses) have first been paid. (3) Legacies cannot be left to any of the heirs included in the scheme of distribution; or it will amount to upsetting the shares, and undue preference of one heir to another. (4) Generally, but not always, the male takes a share double that of a female in his own category.

517. At first sight, the Arabic words seem to mean: "if more than two daughters." But the alternative in the next clause is: "if only one daughter. Logically, therefore, the first clause must mean: "if daughters, two or more." This is the general interpretation, and is confirmed by the supplementary provision in v. 176 at the end of the Sūra, which should be read along with this.

518. This verse deals with the portions allotted to (a) children, and (b) parents. The next verse deals with the portions allotted to (c) husband or wife of the deceased, and (d) collaterals. The children's shares are fixed, but their amount will depend upon what goes to the parents, if both parents are living, and there are also children, both father and mother take a sixth each; if only one parent is living, he or she takes his or her sixth; and the rest goes to the children. If the parents are living, and there is no child or other heir, the mother gets a third (and the father the remaining two-thirds); if there are no children, but there are brothers or sisters (this is interpreted strictly in the plural), the mother has a sixth, and the father apparently the residue, as the father excludes collaterals. This is far from being an exhaustive statement, but it establishes the proposition that children and parents have always some share if they survive, but their shares are affected by the existence and number of the heirs in these categories.

By God; and God is
All-knowing, All-wise.

12. **E**n what your wives leave,
Your share is a half,
If they leave no child;
But if they leave a child,
Ye get a fourth; after payment
Of legacies and debts.
In what ye leave,
Their share is a fourth,⁵¹⁹
If ye leave no child;
But if ye leave a child,
They get an eighth; after payment
Of legacies and debts.

If the man or woman
Whose inheritance is in question,
Has left neither ascendants nor
descendants,⁵²⁰
But has left a brother⁵²¹
Or a sister, each one of the two
Gets a sixth; but if more
Than two, they share in a third:
After payment of legacies
And debts; so that no loss⁵²²
Is caused (to any one).
Thus is it ordained by God;
And God is All-knowing,
Most Forbearing.

مَنْ اللَّهُ إِنْ اللَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ٥

١٧- وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ
إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُنَّ
وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمْ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ
وَصِيَّتِهِنَّ يُوصِينَ بِهِ أَوْ دِينَ
وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْنَ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَكُمْ
وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ
الثُّلُثُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّتِ
تُوصُونَ بِهِ أَوْ دِينَ وَإِنْ كَانَ رَجُلٌ
يُورِثُ كَلَّةً أَوْ امْرَأَةٌ وَكَلَّةً أَوْ
أُخْتُ فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِمَّنِ الشُّدُسُ
إِنْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فِي
الَّذِي مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّتِهِ يُوصَى بِهِ أَوْ دِينَ
غَيْرِ مَضَارٍّ وَصِيَّةُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ

519. The husband takes a half of his deceased wife's property if she leaves no child, the rest going to residuaries; if she leaves a child, the husband gets only a fourth. Following the rule that the female share is generally half the male share, the widow gets a fourth of her deceased husband's property, if he leaves no children, and an eighth if he leaves children. If there are more widows than one, their collective share is a fourth or an eighth as the case may be; *inter se* they divide equally.

520. The word in Arabic is *kalālat*, which is so construed usually. But it was nowhere defined authoritatively in the lifetime of the Apostle. This was one of the three terms about which *Hadhra* 'Umar wished that the Apostle had defined them in his lifetime, the other two being *Khulāfat*, and *ribā* (usury). On the accepted definition, we are concerned with the inheritance of a person who has left no descendant or ascendant (however distant), but only collaterals, with or without a widow or widower. If there is a widow or widower surviving, she or he takes the share as already defined, before the collaterals come in.

521. A "brother or sister" is here interpreted to mean a uterine brother or sister, i.e. a brother or sister by the same mother but not by the same father, as the case of full brothers and sisters or brothers and sisters by the same father but different mothers is understood to be dealt with later, in the last verse of this Sūra. The uterine brother or sister, if only one survives, takes a sixth; if more than one survive, they take a third collectively, and divide among themselves; this on the supposition that there are no descendants or ascendants, however remote. There may, however, be a widow or widower surviving: she or he takes her or his share, as already specified.

The shares of collaterals generally are calculated on a complicated system which cannot be described in a brief note. For these, and the rules about Residuaries (*Aṣāba*), reference should be made to special legal treatises.

522. Debts (in which funeral expenses take first rank) and legacies are the first charge on the estate of a deceased person, before distribution takes place. But equity and fair dealing should be observed in all matters, so that no one's interests are prejudiced. Thus funeral expenses should be reasonable; debts must be genuine and not reckless debts; and the shares must be calculated with fairness,

13. ~~Those~~ Those are limits
Set by God: those who
Obey God and His Apostle
Will be admitted to Gardens
With rivers flowing beneath,
To abide therein (for ever).
And how great will be
That felicity!

۱۳- تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ۝

14. But those who disobey
God and His Apostle
And transgress His limits
Will be admitted
To a Fire, to abide therein :
And they shall have
A humiliating punishment.

۱۴- وَمَنْ يُعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا
خَالِدًا فِيهَا ۝
وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ۝

C. 62.—What can be a holier cement to Society
(iv. 15—42.) Than that women should be chaste and pure,
And crimes against sex rooted out ?
Let decency, kindness, and justice
Prevail in all sex relationships;
Let marriage be cherished and carefully guarded ;
Women's rights secured ; family jars
Adjusted ; and all life lived
In faith, charity, and kindness sincere
To all our fellow-creatures

SECTION 3.

15. ~~If~~ If any of your women
Are guilty of lewdness,⁵²³
Take the evidence of four⁵²⁴
(Reliable) witnesses from amongst
you
Against them ; and if they testify,
Confine them to houses until
Death do claim them,

۱۵- وَالَّذِي يَأْتِيَنَّ الْفَاحِشَةَ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ
فَأَسْتَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعَةٌ مِنْكُمْ
فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ
حَتَّى يَتَوَفَّيَهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ

523. Most commentators understand this to refer to adultery or fornication ; in that case they consider that the punishment was altered to 100 stripes by the later verse, xxiv. 2. But I think it refers to unnatural crime between women, analogous to unnatural crime between men in v. 16 below ; because (1) no punishment is specified here for the man, as would be the case where a man was involved in the crime ; (2) the word *al-lai'is*, the purely feminine plural of *al-lai'*, is used for the parties to the crime ; (3) the punishment is indefinite ; see the next note but one.

524. To protect the honour of women, stricter evidence is required, i. e., the evidence of four instead of the usual two witnesses. It is the same for adultery (see xxiv. 4).

Or God ordain for them
Some (other) way.⁵²⁵

16. If two men among you
Are guilty of lewdness,
Punish them both.
If they repent and amend,
Leave them alone; for God
Is Oft-returning, Most Merciful.

17. God accepts the repentance
Of those who do evil
In ignorance and repent
Soon afterwards; to them
Will God turn in mercy:
For God is full of knowledge
And wisdom.

18. Of no effect is the repentance
Of those who continue⁵²⁶
To do evil, until Death
Faces one of them, and he says,
"Now have I repented indeed;"
Nor of those who die
Rejecting Faith: for them
Have we prepared
A punishment most grievous.

19. **Ye** who believe!
Ye are forbidden to inherit
Women against their will.⁵²⁷
Nor should ye treat them

أَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا ۝

١٦- وَالَّذِينَ يَأْتِيهِمَا مِنْكُمْ فَادُّوهُمَا
فَإِنْ تَابَا وَأَصْلَحَا
فَاعْرِضْهُمَا عَنْهُمَا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ۝

١٧- إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ
لِالَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الشُّرُوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ
ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ
فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ۝

١٨- وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الشُّرُوءَ
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا احْضَرَ أَحَدُهُمُ الْمَوْتَ
قَالَ إِنِّي تُوبْتُ الْفَنَ
وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَسْمُوكُونَ وَهُمْ كَفَّارٌ
أُولَئِكَ أَتَعَذَّبُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۝

١٩- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كُرْهًا
وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ

525. Keep them in their houses until some definite order is received. Those who take the crime to be adultery or fornication construe this definite order ("some other way") to mean some definite pronouncement by the Prophet under inspiration; this was the punishment of flogging under xxiv. 2. If we understand the crime to be unnatural crime, we might presume, in the absence of any definite order ("some other way") that the punishment would be similar to that for men in the next verse. That is itself indefinite, and perhaps intentionally so, as the crime is most shameful, and should be unknown in a well-regulated society. The maximum punishment would of course be imprisonment for life.

526. Note the fine touch. A sin may be fashionable, and people sin together without compunction. When one of them is faced with Death, he repents, but that sort of repentance is no good.

527. Among many nations, including Arabs in the days of ignorance, a step-son or brother took possession of a dead man's widow or widows along with his goods and chattels. This shameful custom is forbidden. See also v. 22 below.

With harshness, that ye may
Take away part of the dower⁵²⁸
Ye have given them,—except
Where they have been guilty
Of open lewdness ;
On the contrary live with them
On a footing of kindness and
equity.

If ye take a dislike to them,
If may be that ye dislike
A thing, and God brings about
Through it a great deal of good.

لَتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ
مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ
إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ
وَعَايِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ
فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا
وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

20. But if ye decide to take
One wife in place of another,
Even if ye had given the latter
A whole treasure⁵²⁹ for dower,
Take not the least bit back :
Would ye take it by slander
And a manifest wrong ?

۲۰- وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَكَانَ
زَوْجٍ ۖ وَآتَيْتُمْ أَحَدَهُنَّ قِنطَارًا
فَلَا تَأْخُذْ وَامْنَهُ شَيْئًا
أَتَأْخُذُونَ ۚ بَلْهَذَا نَكاحُ الْمُيْنِنَا ۝

21. And how could ye take it
When ye have gone in
Unto each other, and they have
Taken (from you) a solemn
covenant?

۲۱- وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَ
وَقَدْ أَقْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ
وَأَخَذَنْ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ۝

22. And marry not women
Whom your fathers married,—
Except what is past :
It was shameful and odious,—
An abominable custom indeed.⁵³⁰

۲۲- وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُمْ مِنَ
النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَمَقْتًا وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ۝

528. Another trick to detract from the freedom of married women was to treat them badly and force them to sue for a *Kaúl'a* divorce (see ii. 229, n. 258) or its equivalent in pre-Islamic custom, when the dower could be claimed back. This is also forbidden. Or the harshness may be exercised in another way : a divorced woman may be prevented, by those who have control of her, from re-marrying unless she remits her dower. All kinds of harshness are forbidden.

529. Treasure : *Qinṣār*—a Talent of gold : see iii. 14, first note

530. See above : iv, 19, first note.

SECTION 4.

23. Prohibited to you

(For marriage) are :—⁵³¹Your mothers, daughters,⁵³²

Sisters ; father's sisters,

Mother's sisters ; brother's

daughters,

Sister's daughters ; foster-mothers⁵³³

(Who gave you suck), foster-

sisters ;

Your wives' mothers ;

Your step-daughters under your⁵³⁴

Guardianship, born of your wives

To whom ye have gone in,—

No prohibition if ye have not gone

in ;—

Wives of your sons⁵³⁵ proceeding

From your loins ;

And two sisters in wedlock

At one and the same time,⁵³⁶

Except for what is past ;

For God is Oft-forgiving,

⁴
30 Most Merciful ;—

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ
وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ
الأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الأَخْتِ
وَأُمَّهَاتُكم التي أَرْضَعْتُمْ
وَأَخَوَاتُكم مِنَ الرضاعة
وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ وَرَبَائِبُكم التي
فِي حُجُومِكُمْ مِنْ نِسَائِكُم التي
دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَإِنْ كُنَّ كُفْرًا
دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَحَلَائِلُ أَبْنَائِكُم الذينَ مِنْ أَصْلَابِكُمْ
وَأَنْ تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الأَخَوَاتَيْنِ
إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

531. This Table of Prohibited Degrees agrees in the main with what is usually accepted among all nations, except in minor details. It begins in the last verse (with father's wives). The scheme is drawn up on the assumption that the person who proposes to marry is a man: if it is a woman, the same scheme will apply, *mutatis mutandis*: it will read: "your fathers, sons, brothers," etc.; or you can always read it from the husband's view of relationship, as there must always be a husband in a marriage.

532. "Mother" includes grandmother (through the father or mother), great-grand-mother, etc.; "daughter" includes grand-daughter (through son or daughter), great-grand-daughter, etc.; "sister" includes full-sister and half-sister. "Father's sister" includes grandfather's sister, etc., and "mother's sister" includes grand-mother's sister, etc.

533. "Fosterage" or milk-relationships play an important part in Muslim Law, and count like blood-relationships: it would therefore seem that not only foster-mothers and foster-sisters, but foster-mother's sister, etc., all come within the prohibited degrees.

534. It is generally (but not unanimously) held that "under your guardianship" is a description, not a condition. Therefore a step-daughter not "under your guardianship" is still within the prohibition if the other condition (about her mother) is fulfilled.

535. "Sons" includes grandsons, but excludes adopted sons, or persons treated as such, on account of the words "proceeding from your loins."

536. The bar against two sisters in marriage together applies to aunt and niece together, but not to deceased wife's sister after the wife dies.

24. Also (prohibited are)

Women already married,

Except those

Whom your right hands

possess : 537

Thus hath God ordained

(Prohibitions) against you :

Except for these, all others

Are lawful, provided

Ye seek (them in marriage)

With gifts from your property,—

Desiring chastity, not lust.⁵³⁸

Seeing that ye derive

Benefit from them, give them

Their dowers (at least)⁵³⁹

As prescribed ; but if,

After a dower is prescribed, ye

agree

Mutually (to vary it),

There is no blame on you.

And God is All-knowing,

All-wise.

٢٤- وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ

إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ

وَأَجَلَ لَكُمْ مَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ

أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ

مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسِفِّينَ

فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ

فَأْتُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ قَرِيبَةً

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ

فِيمَا تَرَضَيْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْفَرِيطَةِ

إِنْ اللَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ○

25. If any of you have not

The means wherewith

To wed free believing women,

They may wed believing

Girls from among those

Whom your right hands

possess : 540

And God hath full knowledge

About your Faith.

Ye are one from another :

Wed them with the leave

Of their owners, and give them

Their dowers, according to what

٢٥- وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنْكُمْ

طَوْلًا أَنْ يَنْكَحَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

فِيَنْ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ

مِنْ فَتَنَاتِكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِأَيْمَانِكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ

فَاتَّكِفُوهُنَّ بِإِذْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ

وَأْتُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

537. Whom your right hands possess : i. e. captives in a Jihād, or war under the orders of the righteous Imām against those who persecute Faith. In such cases formal hostility dissolves civil ties.

538. After defining the prohibited degrees, the verse proceeds to say that women other than those specified may be sought in marriage, but even so, not from motives of lust, but in order to promote chastity between the sexes. Marriage in the original Arabic is here described by a word which suggests a fortress (ḥiṣn) : marriage is, therefore, the fortress of chastity.

539. As the woman in marriage surrenders her person, so the man also must surrender (besides some part of his independence) at least some of his property according to his means. And this gives rise to the law of Dower. A minimum dower is prescribed, but it is not necessary to stick to the minimum, and in the new relationship created, the parties are recommended to act towards each other with the greatest confidence and liberality.

540. That is, captives taken in a Jihād; see note 537 above. "Your right hands" does not mean necessarily that she has been assigned to you, or is your property. All captures in war belong to the community; they are "yours" in that sense. If you seek such a person in marriage, do it from no base motives. Safeguard your faith, and see that she too does believe. In that case, after all, she is of the human brotherhood, and her condition is accidental and redeemable. If the slave bore a child to her master, she would become free. The slave condition is now out of date, in the true spirit of Islam. But there are other conditions in which a woman's (or man's) freedom is restricted, and the principle would apply there also.

Is reasonable: they should be
Chaste, not lustful, nor taking
Paramours: when they
Are taken in wedlock,
If they fall into shame,
Their punishment is half
That for free women.
This (permission) is for those
Among you who fear sin;
But it is better for you
That ye practise self-restraint.
And God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

SECTION 5.

26. God doth wish
To make clear to you
And to show you
The religions of those
Before you; and (He
Doth wish to) turn to you
(In Mercy): and God
Is All-knowing, All-wise.
27. God doth wish
To turn to you,
But the wish of those
Who follow their lusts
Is that ye should turn
Away (from Him),—
Far, far away.
28. God doth wish
To lighten your (difficulties):
For man was created
Weak (in flesh).
29. Oh ye who believe! ⁵⁴¹
Eat not up your property

مُحْصَنَاتٍ غَيْرِ مُبْتَلِيَاتٍ
وَلَا مُتَّخِذَاتِ أَخْدَانٍ
فَإِذَا أَحْصَيْتَ فَإِنَّ أَتَيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ
فَعَلَيْهِنَّ نِصْفُ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ مِنَ
الْعَذَابِ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ
وَأَنْ تَصْبِرُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ٥

٢٦ - يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذَيِّنَ لَكُمْ
وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
وَيَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ٥

٢٧ - وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَيُرِيدَ الَّذِينَ
يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهَوَاتِ
أَنْ تَبِيلُوا مَبِيلًا عَظِيمًا ٥

٢٨ - يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ
وُجُوعَ الْإِنْسَانِ ضَعِيفًا ٥

٢٩ - يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ

541. Let me paraphrase this verse, for there is profound meaning in it. (1) All your property you hold in trust, whether it is in your name, or belongs to the community, or to people over whom you have control. To waste is wrong. (2) In ii. 188 the same phrase occurred, to caution us against greed. Here it occurs, to encourage us to increase property by economic use (traffic and trade), recalling Christ's parable of the Talents (Matt. xxv. 14-30), where the servants who had increased their master's wealth were promoted and the servant who had hoarded was cast into darkness. (3) We are warned that our waste may mean our own destruction ("nor kill or destroy yourselves.") But there is a more general meaning also: we must be careful of our own and other people's lives. We must commit no violence. This is the opposite of "trade and traffic by mutual good-will." (4) Our violence to our own brethren is particularly preposterous, seeing that God has loved and showered His mercies on us and all His creatures.

Among yourselves in vanities :
But let there be amongst you
Traffic and trade
By mutual good-will :
Nor kill (or destroy)
Yourselves : for verily
God hath been to you
Most Merciful !

يَتَنَكَّرُ بِالْبَاطِلِ
إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَنْ تَرَاضٍ وَمِنْكُمْ
وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ۝

30. If any do that
In rancour and injustice,—
Soon shall We scorch them
In the Fire : and easy
It is for God.

۝۳۰. وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ عُدْوَانًا وَظُلْمًا
سُوفَ نُصْلِيهِ نَارًا
وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ۝

31. If ye but eschew
The most heinous
Of the things
Which ye are forbidden to do,
We shall expel
Out of you
All the evil in you,
And admit you to a Gate
Of great honour.

۝۳۱. إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبِيرَاتِ
مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ
نَكْفِرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ
وَنُدْخِلَكُمْ مُدْخَلَ كَرِيمًا ۝

32. And in no wise covet⁵⁴²
Those things in which God
Hath bestowed His gifts
More freely on some of you
Than on others : to men
Is allotted what they earn,
And to women what they earn :
But ask God of His bounty.
For God hath full knowledge
Of all things.

۝۳۲. وَلَا تَمْتَدُّوا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ
عَلَى بَعْضٍ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا اكْتَسَبُوا
وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا اكْتَسَبْنَ
وَسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ۝

33. To (benefit) every one,
We have appointed
Sharers and heirs⁵⁴³
To property left

۝۳۳. وَ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مَوَالِي مِمَّا تَرَكَ
الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ

542. Men and women have gifts from God—some greater than others. They seem unequal, but we are assured that Providence has allotted them by a scheme by which people receive what they earn. If this does not appear clear in our sight, let us remember that we have no full knowledge but God has. We must not be jealous if other people have more than we have—in wealth or position or strength or honour or talent or happiness. Probably things are equalised in the aggregate or in the long run, or equated to needs and merits on a scale which we cannot appraise. If we want more, instead of being jealous or covetous, we should pray to God and place before Him our needs. Though He knows all, and has no need of our prayer, our prayer may reveal to ourselves our shortcomings and enable us to deserve more of God's bounty or make ourselves fit for it.

543. *Mawālī*, plural of *Mawlā*; from the root *walā*, to be near in place or relationship, to follow. *Mawlā* may therefore mean; (1) nearly related, (2) heir, (3) sharer or partner; these three meanings are implied here; (4) neighbour, or friend, or protector, or client (xliv, 44); (5) lord, or master (xvi, 76).

By parents and relatives.
To those, also, to whom
Your right hand was pledged, ⁵⁴⁴
Give their due portion.
For truly God is witness
To all things.

وَالَّذِينَ عَقَدْتَ أَيْمَانُكُمْ
فَاتُّوهُمْ نَصِيبُهُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ۝

SECTION 6.

34. **Q**uen are the protectors ⁵⁴⁵
And maintainers of women,
Because God has given
The one more (strength)
Than the other, and because
They support them
From their means.
Therefore the righteous women
Are obedient, and guard
In (the husband's) absence
What God would have them
guard. ⁵⁴⁶

As to those women
On whose part ye fear
Disloyalty and ill-conduct,
Admonish them (first), ⁵⁴⁷
(Next), refuse to share their beds,
(And last) beat them lightly;
But if they return to obedience,
Seek not against them ⁵⁴⁸
Means (of annoyance):

۲۴-الرجال قَوِّمُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ
بِمَا قَضَى اللَّهُ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ
وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ
فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَنِتَتْ حِفْظًا لِلْغَيْبِ
بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ
وَالَّذِي تَخْتَفُونَ نُشُورَهُنَّ يُعْطَوْنَ
وَأُفْجَرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ
وَأُضْرَبُوهُنَّ
وَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ
فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۝

544. When the emigration took place from Mecca to Medina, bonds and links of brotherhood were established between the Emigrants and the Helpers, and they shared in each other's inheritance. Later, when the Community was solidly established, and relations with those left behind in Mecca were resumed, the rights of blood-relations in Mecca, and the Helper-brethren in Medina were both safeguarded. This is the particular meaning. The more general meaning is similar: respect your ties of blood, of neighbourhood, and of friendly compacts and understandings. Be just to all.

545. *Qawwām*: one who stands firm in another's business, protects his interests, and looks after his affairs; or it may be, standing firm in his own business, managing affairs with a steady purpose. Cf. iv. 135.

546. Or the sentence may be rendered: "and protect (the husband's interests) in his absence, as God has protected them." If we take the rendering as in the text, the meaning is: the good wife is obedient and harmonious in her husband's presence, and in his absence guards his reputation and property and her own virtue, as ordained by God. If we take the rendering as in the note, we reach the same result in a different way: the good wife, in her husband's absence, remembering how God has given her a sheltered position, does everything to justify that position by guarding her own virtue and his reputation and property.

547. In case of family jars four steps are mentioned, to be taken in that order: (1) perhaps verbal advice or admonition may be sufficient; (2) if not, sex relations may be suspended; (3) if this is not sufficient, some slight physical correction may be administered; but *Imām Shāfi'* considers this inadvisable, though permissible, and all authorities are unanimous in deprecating any sort of cruelty, even of the nagging kind, as mentioned in the next clause; (4) if all this fails, a family council is recommended in v. 35 below.

548. Temper, nagging, sarcasm, speaking at each other in other people's presence, reverting to past faults which should be forgiven and forgotten,—all this is forbidden.—And the reason given is characteristic of Islam. You must live all your life as in the presence of God, Who is high above us, but Who watches over us. How petty and contemptible will our little squabbles appear in His presence!

For God is Most High,
Great (above you all).

35. If ye fear a breach
Between them twain,
Appoint two arbiters,
One from his family,
And the other from hers; ⁵⁴⁹
If they wish for peace,
God will cause
Their reconciliation:
For God hath full knowledge,
And is acquainted
With all things.

36. Serve God, and join not ⁵⁵⁰
Equals with Him;
And do good—
To parents, kinsfolk,
Orphans, those in need,
Neighbours who are near, ⁵⁵¹
Neighbours who are strangers,
The Companion by your side, ⁵⁵²
The way-farer (ye meet),
And what your right hands
possess: ⁵⁵³
For God loveth not
The arrogant, the
vainglorious; — ⁵⁵⁴

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا خَبِيرًا ۝

٣٥ - وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا
فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ
وَحَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهَا
إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا
يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا ۝

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا خَبِيرًا ۝

٣٦ - وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا
وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا
وَبِالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسْكِينِ
وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ
وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ
وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ۝

549. An excellent plan for settling family disputes, without too much publicity or mud-throwing, or resort to the chicaneries of the law. The Latin countries recognise this plan in their legal systems. It is a pity that Muslims do not resort to it universally, as they should. The arbiters from each family would know the idiosyncracies of both parties, and would be able, with God's help, to effect a real reconciliation.

550. The essence of Islam is to serve God and do good to your fellow-creatures. This is wider and more comprehensive than "Love God and love your neighbour." For it includes duties to animals as our fellow-creatures, and emphasizes practical service rather than sentiment.

551. *Neighbours who are near*: that is, in local situation as well as intimate relationships, just as *neighbours who are strangers* includes those whom we do not know or who live away from us or in a different sphere altogether.

552. The *Companion by your side* may be your intimate friends and associates, just as the *way-farer you meet* may be a casual acquaintance on your travels. This last is much wider than the "stranger within your gate."

553. *What your right hands possess*: anything that has no civil rights. It includes captives or slaves (where they exist in any form whatever), people in your power, or dumb animals with whom you have to deal. They are all God's creatures and deserve our sympathy and our *practical service*. Cf. Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner": "He prayeth best who loveth best All things both great and small, For the dear God who loveth us, He made and loveth all."

554. Real deeds of service and kindness proceed, not from showing off or from a superior sort of condescension (Cf. "White Man's Burden"), but from a frank recognition of our own humility and the real claims, before God, of all our fellow-creatures. For in our mutual needs we are equal before God, or perhaps the best of us (as the world sees us) may be worse than the worst of us (from the same point of view).

37. Nor those who are niggardly
Or enjoin niggardliness,
Or hide the bounties
Which God hath bestowed ⁵⁵⁵
On them ; for We have prepared,
For those who resist Faith,
A Punishment that steeps ⁵⁵⁶
Them in contempt ; —

38. Nor those who spend
Of their substance, to be seen ⁵⁵⁷
Of men, but have no faith
In God and the Last Day :
If any take the Evil One
For their intimate,
What a dreadful intimate he is !

39. And what burden
Were it on them if they
Had faith in God
And in the Last Day,
And they spent
Out of what God hath
Given them for sustenance ? ⁵⁵⁸
For God hath full
Knowledge of them.

40. God is never unjust
In the least degree :
If there is any good (done),
He doubleth it,
And giveth from His own
Presence a great reward. ⁵⁵⁹

41. How then if We brought
From each People a witness,

٣٧- الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ
وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ
وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ۝

٣٨- وَالَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ
وَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَمَنْ يَكُنِ الشَّيْطَانُ لَهُ قَرِينًا فَسَاءَ
قَرِينًا ۝

٣٩- وَمَا ذَا عَلَيْهِمْ لَوْ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِهِمْ عَلِيمًا ۝

٤٠- إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ
وَإِنْ تَكْ حَسَنَةٌ يَضْعُفْهَا
وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۝

٤١- فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ

555. Arrogance is one reason why our deeds of love and kindness do not thrive. Another is niggardliness or selfishness. God does not love either the one or the other, for they both proceed from want of love of God, or faith in God. Niggardly is the worldly-wise man who not only refuses to spend himself in service, but by example and precept prevents others from doing so, as otherwise he would be made odious by comparison, before his fellow-creatures. So he either makes a virtue of his caution, or hides the gifts which have been given him—wealth, position, talent, etc.

556. Note how the punishment fits the crime. The niggard holds other people in contempt, and in doing so, becomes himself contemptible.

557. A fault opposed to niggardliness, and equally opposed to true Charity, is to spend lavishly to be seen of men. It is mere hypocrisy ; there is no love in it, either for God or for man.

558. *Sustenance* : physical, intellectual, spiritual—everything pertaining to life and growth. Our being is from God, and we must therefore spend ourselves freely for God. How can it be a burden ? It is merely a response to the demand of our own healthy nature.

559. Any little good of our own comes from the purity of our heart. Its results in the world are doubled and multiplied by God's grace and mercy ; but an even greater reward comes from His own Presence, His good pleasure, which brings us nearer to Him.

And We brought thee
As a witness against
These People !⁵⁶⁰

42. On that day
Those who reject Faith
And disobey the Apostle
Will wish that the earth
Were made one with them :⁵⁶¹
But never will they hide
A single fact from God !

وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا ۝

۴۲- يَوْمَ يَمُنُّ الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

وَعَصُوا الرَّسُولَ

لَوْ سَأَوُيَ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضُ

وَلَا يَكْتُمُونَ اللَّهَ حَدِيثًا ۝

وقف النبي عليه السلام

۴۳

C. 63.—Be clean and pure, and seek not occasions
(iv. 43-70.) For quibbles, nor go after sorcery
Or false gods. Be faithful
In your trusts, learn obedience,
And settle your quarrels under the guidance
Of God's Apostle. Ever keep away
From hypocrisy and every kind of falsehood.
Then will you be admitted to a glorious Fellowship
With the highest and noblest in the spiritual world.

SECTION 7.

43. ۞h ye who believe !
Approach not prayers
With a mind befogged,⁵⁶²
Until ye can understand
All that ye say,—
Nor in a state
Of ceremonial impurity
(Except when travelling on the
road),
Until after washing
Your whole body.
If ye are ill,
Or on a journey,
Or one of you cometh
From offices of nature,

۴۳- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرُبُوا الصَّلَاةَ

وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَى

حَتَّى تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ

وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ

حَتَّى تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَى

أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ

أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمُ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ

560. Each Prophet and Leader is a witness for his People and his contemporaries—for those who accept God, and against those who reject Him.

561. Those who reject God's message will wish, when their eyes are opened, that they were reduced to dust, for existence itself will be agony to them. They might like to hide in the dust, but nothing is hidden from God. All their past will stand out clear before Him.

562. The reference is either to a state of intoxication or to a dazed state of mind on account of drowsiness or some other cause. Or perhaps both are implied. Before the prohibition of intoxicants altogether was promulgated, it was at least unbecoming that people should come to prayers in such a state. For prayers it is only right that we should collect our whole minds and approach God in a spirit of reverence. "Prayers" (*ṣalāt*) here may mean "a place of prayers," a Mosque : the resulting meaning would be the same.

Or ye have been
In contact with women,
And ye find no water,⁵⁶³
Then take for yourselves
Clean sand or earth,
And rub therewith
Your faces and hands.
For God doth blot out sins
And forgive again and again.

44. Hast thou not turned
Thy vision to those
Who were given a portion⁵⁶⁴
Of the Book? They traffic
In error, and wish that ye
Should lose the right path.

45. But God hath full knowledge
Of your enemies :
God is enough for a Protector,
And God is enough for a Helper.

46. Of the Jews there are those
Who displace words
From their (right) places,
And say : " We hear
And we disobey " ;⁵⁶⁵
And " Hear what is not
Heard " ; and " *Ra'ina* " ;⁵⁶⁶
With a twist of their tongues
And a slander to Faith.
If only they had said :
" We hear and we obey " ;
And " Do hear " ;

أَوَلَسْتُمْ بِالنِّسَاءِ
فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً
فَتَتَّيَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا
فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوْهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا
۝۳۳ أَلَمْ تَر إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ
الْكِتَابِ يَشْتَرُونَ الضَّلَالَةَ
وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن تَضِلُّوا السَّبِيلَ ۝
۳۴ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِأَعْدَائِكُمْ
وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ نَصِيرًا ۝
۳۵ مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُخَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ
عَن مَّوَاضِعِهَا
وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا
وَأَنصِتْ لَهُمْ عَن مَّوْضِعٍ
وَارَاعِنَا لَيْتَ بَالِ أَتَيْنَهُم
وَطَعْنَا فِي الدِّينِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ وَالْوَاسِعُونَ
وَاطْعْنَا وَأَنصِتْ لَهُمْ

563. The strictest cleanliness and purity of mind and body are required, especially at the time of prayer. But there are circumstances when water for ablutions is not easily obtainable, especially in the dry conditions of Arabia, and then washing with dry sand or clean earth is recommended. Four such circumstances are mentioned: the two last when washing is specially required; the two first when washing may be necessary, but it may not be easy to get water. For a man, when he is ill, cannot walk out far to get water, and a man on a journey has no full control over his supplies. In all four cases, where water cannot be got, cleaning with dry sand or dry earth is recommended. This is called *Tayammum*.

564. Cf. iii. 23 and n. 366.

565. See ii. 93, n. 98. A trick of the Jews was to twist words and expressions, so as to ridicule the most solemn teachings of Faith. Where they should have said, "We hear and we obey," they said aloud, "We hear", and whispered, "We disobey". Where they should have said respectfully, "We hear," they added in a whisper, "What is not heard," by way of ridicule. Where they claimed the attention of the Teacher, they used an ambiguous word, apparently harmless, but in their intention disrespectful.

566. See ii. 104, n. 106. "*Ra'ina*" if used respectfully in the Arabic way, would have meant "Please attend to us." With a twist of their tongue, they suggested an insulting meaning, such as "Oh thou that takest us to pasture!", or in Hebrew, "Our bad one!"

And "Do look at us":
It would have been better
For them, and more proper;
But God hath cursed them
For their Unbelief; and but few
Of them will believe.

47. **O**h ye People of the Book!
Believe in what We
Have (now) revealed, confirming
What was (already) with you,
Before We change the face and
fame ⁵⁶⁷
Of some (of you) beyond all
recognition,
And turn them hindwards,
Or curse them as We cursed
The Sabbath-breakers ⁵⁶⁸
For the decision of God
Must be carried out.

48. God forgiveth not
That equals should be set up
With Him; but He forgiveth
Anything else, to whom
He pleaseth; to set up
Equals with God
Is to devise a sin ⁵⁶⁹
Most heinous indeed.

49. **T**hast thou not turned
Thy vision to those
Who claim sanctity
For themselves? ⁵⁷⁰

وَانْظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَقْوَمًا
وَلَكِنْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ
يَكْفُرُهُمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ٥٦٧

٤٧- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ آمِنُوا
بِمَا نَزَّلْنَا مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَكُمْ
مِنْ قَبْلُ أَنْ تَطْيِسَ وُجُوهًا
فَتُرَدَّهَا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهَا
أَوْ نُلَعِّنَهُمْ كَمَا لَعَنَّا أَصْحَابَ السَّبْتِ
وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا ٥٦٨

٤٨- إِنْ اللَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ
وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ
فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا ٥٦٩

٤٩- أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ
يَزْكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ

567. Literally, "before We obliterate some features (or faces) and turn them front to back (or back to front)": an Arabic idiom, which must be translated freely to yield its proper meaning in English. The face is the chief expression of a man's own real essence; it is also the index of his fame and estimation. The People of the Book had been specially favoured by God with spiritual revelations. If they proved themselves unworthy, they lost their "face." Their eminence would, owing to their own conduct, be turned into degradation. Others would take their place. The first shall be last and the last shall be first: Matt. xix. 30.

568. Cf. ii. 65 and n.

569. Just as in an earthly kingdom the worst crime is that of treason, as it cuts at the very existence of the State, so in the spiritual kingdom, the unforgivable sin is that of contumacious treason against God by putting up God's creatures in rivalry against Him. This is rebellion against the essence and source of spiritual Life. It is what Plato would call the "lie in the soul." But even here, if the rebellion is through ignorance, and is followed by sincere repentance and amendment, God's Mercy is always open (iv. 17).

570. The sanctimonious or self-sanctified people are the farthest from sanctity or purity, which can only proceed from God. They cannot play with God's Truth and yet go on claiming to be guided and purified or justified by God. Their falsehood in itself condemns them: no further proof is needed of their selfishness and evil.

Nay—but God
Doth sanctify
Whom He pleaseth.
And never will He
Depart from justice
In the least little thing.⁵⁷¹

50. Behold! how they invent
A lie against God!
But that by itself
Is a manifest sin!

بَلِ اللَّهِ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَلَا يظْلُمُونَ فَتِيلًا ۝

هـ- اَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ
وَكَفَى بِهِ اِثْمًا مُّبِينًا ۝

SECTION 8.

51. ~~Is~~ Hast thou not turned
Thy vision to those
Who were given a portion⁵⁷²
Of the Book? They believe
In Sorcery and Evil,⁵⁷³
And say to the Unbelievers
That they are better guided
In the (right) way
Than the Believers!

52. They are (men) whom
God hath cursed:
And those whom God
Hath cursed, thou wilt find,
Have no one to help.⁵⁷⁴

53. Have they a share
In dominion or power?
Behold, they give not a farthing⁵⁷⁵
To their fellow men?

هـ- اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا نَصِيْبًا مِّنَ
الْكِتَابِ

يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْحُبَنِ وَالطَّاغُوتِ
وَيَقُولُوْنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا هٰؤُلَاءِ
اَهْدٰى مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا سَبِيْلًا ۝

هـ- اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللّٰهُ
وَمَنْ يَلْعَنِ اللّٰهُ
فَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ لَهُ نَصِيْبًا ۝

هـ- اَمْ لَهُمْ نَصِيْبٌ مِّنَ الْمَالِ
وَإِذَا لَا يُؤْتُوْنَ النَّاسَ نَقِيْرًا ۝

571. Literally, the small skin in the groove of a date stone, a thing of no value: *qatīl*.

572. Cf. iii. 23 and n. 360. The phrase also occurs in iv. 44.

573. The word I have translated *Sorcery* is *jibt*, which may mean divination, sorcery, magic, or any false object of belief or worship, such as an idol. The word I have translated *Evil* (here and in ii. 256) is *ṭāġūt*, which means the evil one, the one who exceeds all bounds, Satan; or it may refer to some idol worshipped by the Pagan Arabs, with whom the Jews of Medina were intriguing against the Holy Apostle. The Jews had taken much to sorcery, magic, divination, and such superstitions.

574. The Jews were then seeking the aid of the Meccan Pagans against Muḥammad, but so far from getting any help from them, they and the Pagans were both overthrown. That was the immediate occasion, but the words have a perfectly general—a universal—meaning.

575. The word I have translated *farthing* is *naqīr*, the groove in a date stone, a thing of no value whatever. Close-fistedness and envy are among the worst forms of selfishness, and appear specially incongruous in people of power, authority, or influence, from whom is expected generosity in giving and generosity in seeing other people's prosperity or happiness.

54. Or do they envy mankind
For what God hath given them
Of His bounty? But We
Had already given the people
Of Abraham the Book
And Wisdom, and conferred
Upon them a great kingdom.⁵⁷⁶

55. Some of them believed,
And some of them averted
Their faces from him: and enough
Is Hell for a burning fire.⁵⁷⁷

56. Those who reject
Our Signs, We shall soon
Cast into the Fire:
As often as their skins
Are roasted through,
We shall change them
For fresh skins,
That they may taste
The Penalty: for God
Is Exalted, Wise.

57. But those who believe
And do deeds of righteousness,
We shall admit to Gardens,
With rivers flowing beneath,—
Their eternal home:
Therein shall they have
Companions pure and holy: ⁵⁷⁸
We shall admit them
To shades, cool and ever
deepening.⁵⁷⁹

58. God doth command you
To render back your Trusts
To those to whom they are due;
And when ye judge

٥٤- أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ
عَلَىٰ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا
٥٥- فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ آمَنَ بِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ
صَدَّ عَنْهُ وَكُفِيَ بِجَهَنَّمَ سَعِيرًا

٥٦- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
سَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِمْ نَارًا
كُلَّمَا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُمْ بِكَالٍ لَّهُمْ جُلُودًا
غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

٥٧- وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا
لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَوْجٌ مَطَهَّرَةٌ
وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا ظَلِيلًا

٥٨- إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ
إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ

576. Such as the kingdoms of David and Solomon, for they had international fame.

577. Envy is like an internal fire, which is in itself a hell.

578. Cf. ii. 25 and n.

579. The Garden is contrasted with the Fire: the shade is contrasted with the roasting. Evil grows with what it feeds on. So goodness and felicity grow with their practice. The good may be alone to start with, but (unlike evil ones) they get holy Companions. Just as spiritual agony increases with what it suffers (typified by fresh skins growing as the old ones burn out), so spiritual felicity finds deeper and deeper meaning (typified by the shades in a Garden, which grow deeper and cooler as you proceed into the interior).

Between man and man,
That ye judge with justice :
Verily how excellent
Is the teaching which He giveth
you !
For God is He Who heareth
And seeth all things.

بَيْنَ النَّاسِ
أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

59. Oh ye who believe !
Obey God, and obey the Apostle,
And those charged
With authority among you.⁵⁸⁰
If ye differ in anything
Among yourselves, refer it
To God and His Apostle,
If ye do believe in God
And the Last Day :
That is best, and most suitable
For final determination.

۝۹- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
اطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ
مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ
فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ۝

SECTION 9.

60. Hast thou not turned
Thy vision to those⁵⁸¹
Who declare that they believe
In the revelations
That have come to thee
And to those before thee ?
Their (real) wish is
To resort together for judgment
(In their disputes)
To the Evil One,
Though they were ordered
To reject him.
But Satan's wish
Is to lead them astray
Far away (from the Right)

۝۶۰- أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ
يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ
وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُتَحَاكَمُوا
إِلَى الظَّالِمِينَ
وَقَدْ أُمِرُوا أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ
وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ
ضَلَالًا
بَعِيدًا ۝

61. When it is said to them :
"Come to what God hath revealed,

۝۶۱- وَلَئِنْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ

580. *Al-ʿamr*—those charged with authority or responsibility or decision, or the settlement of affairs. All ultimate authority rests in God. Men of God derive their authority from Him. As Islam makes no sharp division between sacred and secular affairs, it expects ordinary governments to be imbued with righteousness, and stand in the place of the righteous Imam, and we must respect and obey such authority ; otherwise there will be no order or discipline. Where, in actual fact, there is a sharp division between law and morality, between secular and religious affairs, as is the case in most countries at the present day, Islam still expects secular authority to be exercised in righteousness, and on that condition, enjoins obedience to such authority.

581. The immediate reference was to the Hypocrites (*Munāfiqīn*) of Medina, but the words are general, and the evil of hypocrisy has to be dealt with in all ages. The type of these men is what is called Mr. Facing-both-ways in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Such men declare that they are always with the Right, but calmly intrigue with Evil and Injustice, and even make Injustice their judge if their personal interests are served in that way.

And to the Apostle":
Thou seest the Hypocrites
Avert their faces in disgust.

62. How then, when they are
Seized by misfortune,
Because of the deeds
Which their hands have sent forth?
Then they come to thee,
Swearing by God:
"We meant no more
Than good-will and conciliation!"

63. Those men,—God knows
What is in their hearts;
So keep clear of them,⁵⁸²
But admonish them,
And speak to them a word
To reach their very souls.

64. We sent not an Apostle,
But to be obeyed, in accordance
With the Will of God.
If they had only,
When they were unjust
To themselves,
Come unto thee
And ask God's forgiveness,
And the Apostle had asked
Forgiveness for them,
They would have found
God indeed Oft-returning,
Most Merciful.

65. But no, by thy Lord,
They can have
No (real) Faith,
Until they make thee judge
In all disputes between them,
And find in their souls
No resistance against
Thy decisions, but accept
Them with the fullest conviction.⁵⁸³

وَالِى الرُّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يَصُدُّونَ
عَنْكَ صُدُودًا ۝

٦٢- تَكَيْفَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ
بِمَا قَدْ مَتَّ أَيْدِيهِمْ
ثُمَّ جَاءُوكَ يَحْلِفُونَ ۖ
بِاللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا إِحْسَانًا وَتَوْفِيقًا ۝

٦٣- أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ
وَقُلْ لَهُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا بَلِيغًا ۝

٦٤- وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رُسُلٍ
إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ
وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ
وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرُّسُلُ
لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ۝

٦٥- فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
حَتَّى يُحْكُمَوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ
ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ
حَرَجًا مِمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا سَلِيمًا ۝

582. How should hypocrites be treated? To take them into your confidence would of course be foolish. To wage unrelenting war against them may destroy the hope of reforming them and purging them of their hypocrisy. The man of God keeps clear of their wiles, but at the same time, does not hesitate to show them the error of their ways, nor to put in a word in season, to penetrate their hearts and win them back to God.

583. The test of true Faith is not mere lip profession, but bringing all our doubts and disputes to the one in whom we profess faith. Further, when a decision is given we are not only to accept it, but find in our inmost souls no difficulty and no resistance, but on the contrary a joyful acceptance springing from the conviction of our-own faith.

66. If We had ordered them
To sacrifice their lives
Or to leave their homes,
Very few of them
Would have done it :⁵⁸⁴
But if they had done
What they were (actually) told,
It would have been best
For them, and would have gone
Farthest to strengthen their (faith) ;

٦٦- وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ اقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ
أَوْ اخْرُجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ
مَا فَعَلُوهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِنْهُمْ
وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ بِهِ
لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيثًا ۝

67. And behold ! We should have
Given them from Our Presence
A great reward ;

٦٧- وَإِذَا لَا تَجِدُهُمْ
فَرِحْنَا بِكُنَا أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۝

68. And We should have
Shown them the Straight Way.⁵⁸⁵

٦٨- وَلَهَدَيْنَهُمْ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ۝

69. All who obey God
And the Apostle
Are in the company
Of those on whom
Is the Grace of God,—
Of the Prophets (who teach),
The Sincere (lovers of Truth),
The Witnesses (who testify),
And the Righteous (who do good) :
Ah ! what a beautiful
Fellowship !⁵⁸⁶

٦٩- وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ
فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ
مِنَ الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ
وَالشَّاهِدَاتِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ
وَحَسَنَ أَوْلَئِكَ رَفِيقًا ۝

584. The highest in faith willingly sacrifice their lives, their homes, and all that they hold dearest, in the cause of God. Those whose faith is not so strong are expected at least to do what a loyal member of any society does, submit his doubts and disputes to the head of the society and cheerfully accept his decision and submit to it. The contrast is between the Hypocrites who will not even do this, and the really devoted men and women who would voluntarily sacrifice their lives.

585. Four advantages of obedience to God are mentioned, in the order in which they will appeal to the beginner in faith : (1) his own benefit ("best for them") ; (2) strengthening of his faith, as he becomes more and more at home in the spiritual world ; (3) reward from God's own Presence, such intense conviction that no further arguments are needed ; (4) the Straight Way, in which there is no doubt or difficulty whatever in our practical conduct.

586. A passage of the deepest spiritual meaning. Even the humblest man who accepts Faith and does good becomes at once an accepted member of a great and beautiful spiritual Fellowship. It is a company which lives perpetually in the sunshine of God's Grace. (This passage partly illustrates Q. i. 7.) It is a glorious hierarchy, of which four grades are specified : (1) The highest is that of the Prophets or Apostles, who get plenary inspiration from God, and who teach mankind by example and precept. That rank in Islam is held by Muḥammad Muṭaff. (2) The next are those whose badge is sincerity and truth ; they love and support the truth with their person, their means, their influence, and all that is theirs. That rank was held by the special Companions of Muḥammad, among whom the type was that of Hadhrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddiq. (3) The next are the noble army of Witnesses, who testify to the truth. The testimony may be by martyrdom, as in the case of Imāms Ḥasan and Ḥusain. Or it may be by the tongue of the true Preacher or the pen of the devoted scholar, or the life of the man devoted to service. (4) Lastly, there is the large company of Righteous people, the ordinary folk who do their ordinary business, but always in a righteous way. They are the rank and file of the beautiful Fellowship, in which each has his place and yet all feel that they derive glory from the common association.

70. Such is the Bounty
From God : and sufficient
Is that God knoweth all.⁵⁸⁷

هَذِهِ الْفَضْلُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ عَلِيمًا

C. 64.—Keep together in your noble Brotherhood :
(iv. 71-91.) Share its joys and sorrows : strive
And fight the good fight, and never fear,
For this life is short, and the Hereafter
Eternal. Allow not yourselves to be drawn
Into unbelief and cowardice :
Maintain the Right. Protect yourselves
Against Hypocrites and Deserters,
But pursue them not unrelentingly.

SECTION 10.

71. Oh ye who believe !
Take your precautions,
And either go forth in parties
Or go forth all together.⁵⁸⁸

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا خُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ
فَإِن فَرَرْتُمْ تَبَّاتِ أَوْ انْفِرُوا جَمِيعًا

72. There are certainly among you
Men who would tarry behind :⁵⁸⁹
If a misfortune befalls you,
They say : " God did favour us
In that we were not
Present among them."

وَأَنَّ مِنْكُمْ لَمَن لَّيْطَرُنَّ
فَإِنْ أَصَابَكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا قَدْ أَنْعَمَ
اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا إِذْ لَمْ أَكُنْ مَعَهُمْ شَاهِدِينَ

73. But if good fortune comes to you
From God, they would be sure
To say—as if there had never been
Ties of affection between you
and them—
"Oh! I wish I had been with
them ;

وَلَكِنْ أَصَابَكُمْ فَضْلٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ
لَيَقُولُنَّ كَأَن لَّمْ تَكُنْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُ
مَوَدَّةٌ يَلْبِغْتَنِي كُنْتُ مَعَهُمْ
فَأَفُوزَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

A fine thing should I then
Have made of it ! "⁵⁹⁰

587. If a generous General gives the private soldier the privilege of sitting with his comrades and officers, high and low, in one common Brotherhood, people may perhaps wonder : how may this be ? If we are admitted to that Fellowship, we want to know no more. It is enough to us that God knows our humility and our unworthiness, and with His full knowledge admits us to that glorious Fellowship !

588. No fight should be undertaken without due preparations and precautions. When these are taken, we must go boldly forward. " Go forth " is therefore repeated for emphasis. But we must go forth in a collective spirit, and not in a selfish spirit—either in small parties or all together, as our Leader determines. We must not tarry like the doubter in the next two verses.

589. The doubter detaches himself in thought and action from the community. If the general body has a reverse, he blesses God that he was not among them, instead of being ashamed of himself for desertion. If the general body wins a success, he does not rejoice for the common cause, but only regrets for himself that he was not there to share in the glory and the gains !

590. Just a selfish man's thought. Such men are far from being a source of strength to their community. They are no use in a fight, and the next verse discards them.

74. **Let** those fight
In the cause of God
Who sell the life of this world
For the Hereafter,⁵⁹¹
To him who fighteth
In the cause of God,—
Whether he is slain
Or gets victory—
Soon shall We give him
A reward of great (value).

٤٣- فَلْيُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
الَّذِينَ يَشْرُونَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ
وَمَنْ يُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
فَيُقْتَلْ أَوْ يَغْلِبْ
فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيَهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

75. And why should ye not
Fight in the cause of God
And of those who, being weak,⁵⁹²
Are ill-treated (and oppressed)?—
Men, women, and children,
Whose cry is: "Our Lord!
Rescue us from this town,
Whose people are oppressors;
And raise for us from Thee
One who will protect,
One who will help!"⁵⁹³

٤٤- وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ
وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ
هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمُ أَهْلُهَا
وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا
وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا

76. Those who believe
Fight in the cause of God,
And those who reject Faith
Fight in the cause of Evil:
So fight ye against the
Friends⁵⁹⁴ of Satan: feeble indeed
Is the cunning of Satan.

٤٥- الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ
الطَّاغُوتِ فَقَاتِلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ
إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا

SECTION 11.

77. **Has** thou not turned
Thy vision to those

٤٦- أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ

591. It is not every one least of all, poltroons and faint-hearted persons—who is fit to fight in the cause of God. To do so is a privilege, and those who understand the privilege are prepared to sacrifice all their interests in this life, and this life itself; for they know that it is the sacrifice of something fleeting and of little value, for the sake of something everlasting, and of immense value. Whether (in appearance) they win or lose, in reality they win the prize for which they are fighting,—viz., honour and glory in the sight of God. Note that the only alternatives here are Death or Victory! The true fighter knows no defeat.

592. *Mustadh'a*=one reckoned weak, and therefore ill-treated and oppressed. Cf. iv. 98, and vii. 150.

593. Even from the human point of view the cause of God is the cause of justice, the cause of the oppressed. In the great persecution, before Mecca was won again, what sorrows, threats, tortures, and oppressions, were suffered by those whose faith was unshaken? Muhammad's life and that of his adherents was threatened: they were mocked, assaulted, insulted and beaten; those within the power of the enemy were put into chains and cast into prison; others were boycotted, and shut out of trade, business, and social intercourse; they could not even buy the food they wanted, or perform their religious duties. The persecution was redoubled for the believing slaves, women, and children after the Hijrat. Their cry for a protector and helper from God was answered when Muhammad the Chosen One brought freedom and peace to Mecca again.

594. *Auliya*, plural of *wali*, friend, supporter, protector, patron; from the same root as *mawla* for which see iv. 33, n. 541.

Who were told to hold back ⁵⁹⁵
 Their hands (from fight)
 But establish regular prayers
 And spend in regular Charity?
 When (at length) the order
 For fighting was issued to them,
 Behold! a section of them
 Feared men as—
 Or even more than—
 They should have feared God :
 They said : " Our Lord!
 Why hast Thou ordered us
 To fight? Wouldst Thou not
 Grant us respite
 To our (natural) term, ⁵⁹⁶
 Near (enough)? " Say : " Short
 Is the enjoyment of this world :
 The Hereafter is the best
 For those who do right :
 Never will ye be
 Dealt with unjustly
 In the very least !

78. " Wherever ye are,
 Death will find you out,
 Even if ye are in towers
 Built up strong and high ! "

If some good befalls them,
 They say, " This is from God ";
 But if evil, they say,
 " This is from thee " (oh
 Prophet). ⁵⁹⁷

قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ
 وَآتَوْهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ
 فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ
 يَخْشَوْنَ النَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ
 أَوْ أَشَدَّ خَشْيَةً
 وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لِمَ كُتِبَتْ
 عَلَيْنَا الْقِتَالُ
 لَوْلَا نُحْرِمُكُمْ إِلَى أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ
 قُلْ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ
 وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِمَنِ اتَّقَى
 وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا

٤٨-اِنَّ مَا كُنْتُمْ يُدْرِكُ كُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ
 فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ وَاِنْ تُصِيبْكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ
 يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
 وَاِنْ تُصِيبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ
 يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ

595. Before the command for fighting was issued there were some who were impatient, and could scarcely be held back. They wanted fighting from human motives,—pugnacity, the love of plunder, hatred against their enemies, the gaining of personal ends. Fighting from such motives is wrong at all times. When the testing time came, and they had to fight, not for their own hand, but for a Sacred Cause, in which there was much suffering and little personal gain, the Hypocrites held back and were afraid.

596. " Our natural term of life," they would say, " is short enough; why should we jeopardise it by fighting in which there is no personal gain? " The answer is begun in this verse and continued in the next.

Briefly, the answer is: (1) in any case the pleasures of this world are short: this life is fleeting; the first thing for a righteous man to do is to emancipate himself from its obsessions; (2) to do your duty is to do right; therefore turn your attention mainly to duty; (3) when duty calls for self-sacrifice, be sure that God's call is never unjust, and never such as to exceed your capacity; and (4) if you fear death, you will not by fear escape death; it will find you out wherever you are; why not face it boldly when duty calls?

597. The Hypocrites were inconsistent, and in this reflect unregenerate mankind. If a disaster happens, due to their own folly, they blame somebody else; but if they are fortunate, they claim reflected credit by pretending that Heaven has favoured them because of their own superior merits. The modern critic discards even this pretence, eliminates Heaven altogether, and claims all credit direct to himself, unless he brings in blind Chance, but that he does mostly to "explain" misfortune. If we look to the ultimate Cause of all things, all things come from God. But if we look to the proximate cause of things, our own merit is so small, that we can hardly claim credit for good ourselves with any fairness. In God's hand is all good: iii. 26. On the other hand, the proximate cause of our evil is due to some wrong in our own inner selves; for never are we dealt with unjustly in the very least: iv. 77.

Say : " All things are from God."
But what hath come
To these people,
That they fail
To understand
A single fact?

قُلْ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ
فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ
لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا ٥٩

79. Whatever good, (oh man !)
Happens to thee, is from God ;
But whatever evil happens
To thee, is from thy (own) soul.
And We have sent an Apostle ⁵⁹⁸
To (instruct) mankind.
And enough is God
For a witness.

٥٩- مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ
وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ
وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا
وَكُفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ٥٩

80. He who obeys
The Apostle, obeys God :
But if any turn away,
We have not sent thee
To watch over
(Their evil deeds). ⁵⁹⁹

٨٠- مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ
وَمَنْ تَوَلَّى
فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا ٨٠

81. They have " Obedience "
On their lips ; but
When they leave thee,
A section of them
Meditate all night
On things very different
From what thou tellest them.
But God records
Their nightly (plots) :
So keep clear of them,
And put thy trust in God,
And enough is God

٨١- وَيَقُولُونَ طَاعَةٌ
فَإِذَا بَرَأُوا مِنْ عِندِكَ بَكَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ
عَلَىٰ الَّذِي تَقُولُونَ
وَاللَّهُ يَكْتُبُ مَا يُبْهَمُونَ
فَاعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ
وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ

598. To blame a man of God for our misfortunes is doubly unjust. For he comes to save us from misfortune, and it is because we flout him or pay no heed to him, that our own rebellion brings its own punishment. If we realise this truth we shall be saved from two sins : (1) the sin of injustice to God's Messengers, who come for our good, and not for our harm ; and (2) the sin of not realising our own shortcomings or rebellion, and thus living in spiritual darkness. If the Message is from God, that carries its own authority : " enough is God for a witness."

599. The Apostle was sent to preach, guide, instruct, and show the Way,—not to drive people to good, or to detect all that was evil. That is not God's Plan, which trains the human Will. The Apostle's duty is therefore to convey the Message of God, in all the ways of persuasion that are open to him. If men perversely disobey that Message, they are not disobeying him but they are disobeying God. In the same way those who obey the Message are obeying God. They are not obliging the Messenger : they are merely doing their duty.

As a disposer of affairs.⁶⁰⁰

82. Do they not consider
The Qur'an (with care)?
Had it been from other
Than God, they would surely
Have found therein
Much discrepancy.⁶⁰¹

83. When there comes to them
Some matter touching
(Public) safety or fear,
They divulge it.
If they had only referred it
To the Apostle, or to those
Charged with authority
Among them, the proper
Investigators would have
Tested it from them (direct).
Were it not for the Grace
And Mercy of God unto you,
All but a few of you
Would have fallen
Into the clutches of Satan.⁶⁰²

84. When fight in God's cause —
Thou art held responsible
Only for thyself —
And rouse the Believers.
It may be that God
Will restrain the fury

وَكُلِّى بَالَهُ وَكَيْلًا

٨٢- أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ

وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ

لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

٨٣- وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ

أَمْرٌ مِنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوِ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ

وَلَوْ رُدُّوا إِلَى الرَّسُولِ

وَأِلَى أُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ

لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ

وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ

لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

٨٤- فَقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

لَا تُكَلِّفُ إِيَّاهُ نَفْسًا وَحَرِيصَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكُفَّ بَأْسَ

600 If we trust to people who are not true, they are more likely to hinder than to help. But God is All-good as well as All-powerful, and all our affairs are best entrusted to His care. He is the best Guardian of all interests.

Therefore we should not trust the lip professions of Hypocrites, but trust in God. Nor should our confidence in God be shaken by any secret plots that enemies hatch against us. We should take all human precautions against them, but having done so, we should put our trust in God, Who knows the inner working of events better than any human mind can conceive.

601. The unity of the Qur'an is admittedly greater than that of any other sacred book. And yet how can we account for it except through the unity of God's purpose and design? From a mere human point of view, we should have expected much discrepancy, because (1) the Messenger who promulgated it was not a learned man or philosopher, (2) it was promulgated at various times and in various circumstances, and (3) it is addressed to all grades of mankind. Yet, when properly understood, its various pieces fit together better than a jig-saw puzzle, even when arranged without any regard to chronological order. There was just the One Inspirer and the One Inspired.

602. In times of war or public panic, thoughtless repetition of gossip is rightly restrained by all effective States. If false, such news may cause needless alarm: if true, it may frighten the timid and cause some misgivings even to the bravest, because the counterpart of it—the preparations made to meet the danger—is not known. Thoughtless news, true or false, may also encourage the enemy. The proper course is quietly to hand all news direct to those who are in a position to investigate it. They can then sift it and take suitable measures to checkmate the enemy. Not to do so, but to deal with news either thoughtlessly or maliciously, is to fall directly into the snares of Evil.

Of the Unbelievers ;
For God is the strongest
In might and in punishment.⁶⁰³

85. Whoever recommends
And helps a good cause
Becomes a partner therein :
And whoever recommends
And helps an evil cause,
Shares in its burden :
And God hath power⁶⁰⁴
Over all things.

86. **W**hen a (courteous) greeting
Is offered you, meet it
With a greeting still more
Courteous, or (at least)
Of equal courtesy.
God takes careful account⁶⁰⁵
Of all things.

87. God ! There is no god
But He : of a surety
He will gather you together
Against the Day of Judgment,
About which there is no doubt.
And whose word can be
Truer than God's ?

SECTION 12.

88. **W**hy should ye be
Divided into two parties

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا^٦
وَاللَّهُ أَشَدُّ بَأْسًا وَأَعَزُّ نَجْدًا ۝

٨٥- مَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ
نَصِيبٌ مِنْهَا ۚ وَمَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً سَيِّئَةً
يَكُنْ لَهُ كِفْلٌ مِنْهَا ۗ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُقِينًا ۝

٨٦- وَإِذَا حُيِّيتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ
فَحَيُّوْا بِأَحْسَنِ مِنْهَا
أَوْ رُدُّوْهَا ۗ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا ۝

٨٧- اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
لَيَجْعَلَنَّكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ
لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۗ
وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِنْ الَّذِي خَلَقَ النَّاسَ

٨٨- فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِتْنَةً

603. The courage of Muhammad was as notable as his wisdom, his gentleness, and his trust in God. Facing fearful odds, he often stood alone, and took the whole responsibility on himself. But his example and visible trust in God inspired and roused the Muslims, and also—speaking purely from a human point of view—restrained the fury of his enemies. When we consider that he was God's inspired Messenger, to carry out His Plan, we can see that nothing can resist that Plan. If the enemy happens to have strength, power, or resources, God's strength, power, and resources are infinitely greater. If the enemy is meditating punishment on the righteous for their righteousness, God's punishment for such wickedness will be infinitely greater and more effective.

604. In this fleeting world's chances God's providence and justice may not always appear plain to our eyes. But we are asked to believe that if we help and support a good cause, we share in all its credit and in its eventual victory. And conversely, we cannot support a bad cause without sharing in all its evil consequences. If appearances seem against this faith, let us not be deceived by appearances. For God has power over all things.

605. The necessary correlative to the command to fight in a good cause is the command to cultivate sweetness and cordiality in our manners at all times. For fighting is an exceptional necessity, while the sweetness of daily human intercourse is a normal need. Further, we give kindness and courtesy without asking, and return it if possible in even better terms than we received, or at least in equally courteous terms. For we are all creatures of one God, and shall be brought together before Him.

About the Hypocrites ?⁶⁰⁶
 God hath upset them
 For their (evil) deeds.
 Would ye guide those
 Whom God hath thrown
 Out of the Way ? For those
 Whom God hath thrown
 Out of the Way, never
 Shalt thou find the Way.

وَاللّٰهُ اَرْكَسَهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوْا
 اَتُرِيْدُونَ اَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ اَضَلَّ اللّٰهُ
 وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللّٰهُ
 فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيْلًا

89. They but wish that ye
 Should reject Faith,
 As they do, and be
 On the same footing (as they) :
 But take not friends
 From their ranks
 Until they flee⁶⁰⁷
 In the way of God
 (From what is forbidden).
 But if they turn renegades,
 Seize them and slay them
 Wherever ye find them ;
 And (in any case) take
 No friends or helpers
 From their ranks ;—

۸۹-وَيُرِيْدُوْنَ اَلَوْ يَكْفُرُوْنَ كَمَا كَفَرُوْا
 فَتَكُوْنُوْنَ سَوَاءً
 فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْهُمْ اَوْلِيَاءَ
 حَتّٰى يَنْهَاجُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ
 فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا
 فَقُلُوْهُمْ وَاَقْتُلُوْهُمْ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوْهُمْ
 وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْهُمْ وِلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيْرًا ۝

90. Except those who join
 A group between whom
 And you there is a treaty⁶⁰⁸

۹۰-اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ يَصِلُوْنَ اِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَهُمْ
 وَبَيْنَكُمْ رِيْثًا

606. When the desertion of the Hypocrites at Uhud nearly caused a disaster to the Muslim cause there was great feeling among the Muslims of Medina against them. One party wanted to put them to the sword : another to leave them alone. The actual policy pursued avoided both extremes, and was determined by these verses. It was clear that they were a danger to the Muslim community if they were admitted into its counsels, and in any case they were a source of demoralisation. But while every caution was used, no extreme measures were taken against them. On the contrary, they were given a chance of making good. If they made a sacrifice for the cause ("flee from what is forbidden," see next verse), their conduct purged their previous cowardice, and their sincerity entitled them to be taken back. But if they deserted the Muslim community again, they were treated as enemies, with the additional penalty of desertion which is enforced by all nations actually at war. Even so, a humane exception was made in the two cases specified in v. 90.

607. *Flee* : the verbal form from which the noun *hijrat* is derived. Bukhārī interprets this rightly as fleeing from all that is forbidden. This would include hijrat in the technical sense of leaving a place in which the practice of religion is not allowed. But it is more general. In time of war, if a man is willing to submit to discipline and refrain from infringing orders issued, he has proved his fidelity and may be treated as a member of the community at war.

On the other hand if he by false pretences comes into the inner counsels merely to betray them, he may rightly be treated as a traitor or deserter and be punished for his treason or desertion ; or if he escapes, he can be treated as an enemy and is entitled to no mercy. He is worse than an enemy : he has claimed to be of you in order to spy on you, and been all the time helping the enemy.

608. *Except* : The exception refers to "seize them and slay them", the death penalty for repeated desertion. Even after such desertion, exemption is granted in two cases. One is where the deserter took asylum with a tribe with whom there was a treaty of peace and amity. Presumably such a tribe (even though outside the pale of Islam) might be trusted to keep the man from fighting against the forces of Islam—in the modern phrase, to disarm him and render him harmless. The second case for exemption is where the man from his own heart desires never to take up arms against Islam, though he does not wish to join the forces of Islam, to fight against a hostile tribe (perhaps his own) fighting against Islam. But he must make a real approach, giving guarantees of his sincerity. In the modern phrase he would be "on parole". But this provision is much milder than that in modern military codes, which grant the privilege only to enemy prisoners, not to those who have deserted from the army granting them parole. The Hypocrites were in that position, but humanity as well as policy treated them with great leniency.

(Of peace), or those who
approach⁶⁰⁹

You with hearts restraining
Them from fighting you
As well as fighting their own
People. If God had pleased,
He could have given them
Power over you, and they
Would have fought you :
Therefore if they withdraw
From you but fight you not,
And (instead) send you
(Guarantees of) peace, then God
Hath opened no way
For you (to war against them).

91. Others you will find
That wish to gain
Your confidence as well
As that of their people :
Every time they are sent back⁶¹⁰
To temptation, they succumb
Thereto: if they withdraw not
From you and give you (guarantees)
Of peace as well as
Restrain their hands,
Seize them and slay them
Wherever ye get them :
In their case
We have provided you
With a clear argument
Against them.

أَوْ جَاءُوكُمْ حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ
أَنْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ أَوْ يُقَاتِلُوا قَوْمَهُمْ
وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَسَلَّطَهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَقَاتِلُوكُمْ
فَأَنْ أَعْتَذَلُوكُمْ
فَلَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ
وَالْقَوْلُ الْبَيْنُ الْبَيْنُ السَّلَامُ
فَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا

٩١- سَيَجِدُونَ آخَرِينَ
يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُبَدِّلُوا قَوْلَهُمْ
كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا إِلَى الْفِتْنَةِ أُرْكَسُوا فِيهَا
فَأَنْ تَعِزُّوهُمْ
وَيُقَاتِلُوا إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامُ وَيَكْفُرُوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ
فَتُحْدَوْنَهُمْ وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ
وَأُولَئِكَ جَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا
مُبِينًا

C. 65.—The lives of those who believe

- (iv. 92-104.) Are sacred : if one is slain
By mistake, full compensation
Should be made. Nor should
A stranger, even in time of war,
Be treated as an enemy, without

609. Approach or come : refers not to the physical act of coming, but to the mental attitude : the heart is mentioned for sincerity. When they sincerely promise not to fight against you, do not pursue them. Remember that if they had fought against you, your difficulties would have been increased. Their neutrality itself may be a great advantage to you. So long as you are satisfied that they are sincere and their acts support their declarations of peace with you, you should not consider yourself justified in pursuing them and warring against them.

610. As opposed to the two classes of deserters to whom clemency may be shown, there is a class which is treacherous and dangerous and cannot be left alone. They try to win your confidence, and are all the time in the confidence of the enemy. Every time they get a chance, they succumb to the temptation of double-dealing. The best way of dealing with them is to treat them as open enemies. Keep them not in your midst. If they give you guarantees of peace and do not actually fight against you, well and good. If not, they are deserters actively fighting in the ranks of the enemy. They have openly given you proof, and you can fairly seize and slay them in war as deserters and enemies.

The fullest investigation. Live not
In places hostile to Islam,
If ye are able to migrate,—
And spacious is God's earth.
Devotion and prayer may be
Shortened in times of danger.
Take every precaution for safety,
But be bold and undaunted in fight.

SECTION 13.

92. Never should a Believer
Kill a Believer; but
(If it so happens) by mistake,⁶¹¹
(Compensation is due):
If one (so) kills a Believer,
It is ordained that he
Should free a believing slave,
And pay compensation
To the deceased's family,
Unless they remit it freely.
If the deceased belonged
To a people at war with you,
And he was a Believer,
The freeing of a believing slave
(Is enough). If he belonged
To a people with whom
Ye have a treaty of mutual
Alliance, compensation should
Be paid to his family,
And a believing slave be freed.
For those who find this
Beyond their means, (is prescribed)
A fast for two months
Running: by way of repentance
To God: for God hath
All knowledge and all wisdom.

٩٢- وَمَا كَانَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ أَنْ يُقْتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا
إِلَّا خَطَاً وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا
خَطَاً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ
وَدِيَّةٌ مُسْلَمَةٌ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ
إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَّدَّقُوا
فَإِنْ كَانَ مِنَ قَوْمٍ عَدُوٍّ لَكُمْ
وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ
وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنَ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ
عَهْدٌ فَدِيَّةٌ مُسْلَمَةٌ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ
وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ
فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ
فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

611. Life is absolutely sacred in the Islamic Brotherhood. But mistakes will sometimes happen, as did happen in the *mâlles* at Uhud, when some Muslims were killed (being mistaken for the enemy) by Muslims. There was no guilty intention: therefore there was no murder. But all the same, the family of the deceased was entitled to compensation unless they freely remitted it, and in addition it was provided that the unfortunate man who made the mistake should free a believing slave. Thus a deplorable mistake was made the occasion for winning the liberty of a slave who was a Believer, for Islam discountenances slavery. The compensation could only be paid if the deceased belonged to a Muslim society or to some people at peace with the Muslim society. Obviously it could not be paid if, though the deceased was a Believer, his people were at war with the Muslim society: even if his people could be reached, it is not fair to increase the resources of the enemy. If the deceased was himself an enemy at war, obviously the laws of war justify his being killed in warfare unless he surrendered. If the man who took life unintentionally has no means from which to free a believing slave or to give compensation, he must still by an act of strict self-denial (fasting for two whole months running) show that he is cognizant of the grave nature of the deed he has done and sincerely repentant. I take this to apply to all three cases mentioned: that is, where a Believer killed a Believer unintentionally and the deceased (1) belonged to the same community as you, or (2) belonged to a community at war with you, or (3) belonged to a community in alliance with you.

93. If a man kills a Believer
Intentionally, his recompense ⁶¹²
Is Hell, to abide therein
(For ever) : and the wrath
And the curse of God
Are upon him, and
A dreadful penalty
Is prepared for him.

٩٣- وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا
فَجَزَاءُ ۖ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا
وَعُذِيبُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعْنُهُ
وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ۝

94. Oh ye who believe !
When ye go abroad ⁶¹³
In the cause of God,
Investigate carefully,
And say not to any one
Who offers you a salutation :
" Thou art none of a Believer ! " —
Coveting the perishable goods
Of this life : with God
Are profits and spoils abundant.
Even thus were ye yourselves
Before, till God conferred
On you His favours : therefore
Carefully investigate.
For God is well aware
Of all that ye do.

٩٤- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا
لِمَنْ آتَىٰ إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامُ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا
تَتَّبِعُونَ عَرَصَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَغَازٍ كَثِيرَةٌ
كَذَٰلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ
فَمَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ كُفِّرْتُمْ قَتَلْتُمَا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ۝

95. Not equal are those
Believers who sit (at home)
And receive no hurt,
And those who strive
And fight in the cause
Of God with their goods
And their persons.
God hath granted
A grade higher to those
Who strive and fight

٩٥- لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
خَلْفَ أَوَّلِي السُّلْطَانِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ
فَقَضَىٰ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ

612. What is mentioned here is the punishment in the Hereafter, the spiritual consequences. The legal consequences, enforceable by human society, are mentioned in ii. 178, under the rules of *Qisas*. That is, a life should be taken for a life destroyed, but this should be on a scale of equality : a single murder should not commit a whole tribe to a perpetual blood-feud, as in the days of ignorance. But if the heirs of the man slain accept reasonable compensation, this should be accepted, and the taking of a life for a life should be put a stop to. This course leads to the saving of life, and is commanded to men of understanding.

613. Go abroad : *gharaba* = to travel, to go abroad, either for *jihad*, or for honest trade or other service, which if done with pure motives, counts as service in the cause of God. The immediate occasion was in connection with *jihad*, but the words are general, and can be applied to all circumstances in which a man falls through spiritual pride : he thinks he is not as other men are, but forgets that, but for the grace of God, he is himself a sinner ! In war (or in peace) we are apt to catch some worldly advantage by pluming ourselves on our superiority in Faith. In war perhaps we want to gain glory or booty by killing a supposed enemy ! In peace we make light of other people in order to steal some advantage or material gain ! This is wrong. The righteous man, if he is really out in God's service, has more abundant and richer gifts to think of in the spiritual world.

In the cause of God
Than to those who sit (at home).
Unto all (in Faith)⁶¹⁴
Hath God promised good :
But those who strive
Hath He distinguished
Above those who sit (at home)
By a special reward,—

96. Ranks specially bestowed
By Him, and Forgiveness
And Mercy. For God is
Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

SECTION 14.

97. ~~W~~hen angels take
The souls of those
Who die in sin
Against their souls,⁶¹⁵
They say : " In what (fight)
Were ye ? " They reply :
" Weak and oppressed
Were we in the earth."
They say : " Was not
The earth of God
Spacious enough for you
To move yourselves away
(From evil) ? " Such men
Will find their abode
In Hell,—What an evil
Refuge !—

عَلَى الْقُعْدِينَ دَرَجَةً ۖ
وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى ۖ
وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ
عَلَى الْقُعْدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۝

۹۶- دَرَجَاتٍ مِنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً ۖ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ۝

۹۷- إِنَّ الدِّينَ تَوَقَّعَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
ظَالِمِينَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ
قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً
فَتَمُوتُوا فِيهَا
قَالُوا لَيْلِكَ مَا وَلَّهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ
وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ۝

614. God's goodness is promised to all people of Faith. But there are degrees among men and women of Faith. There are people with natural inertia; they do the minimum that is required of them, but no more. There are people who are weak in will: they are easily frightened. There are people who are so strong in will and so firm in faith that they are determined to conquer every obstacle, whether in their own physical or other infirmities or in the external world around them. In a time of jihad, when people give their all, and even their lives, for the common cause, they must be accounted more glorious than those who sit at home, even though they have goodwill to the cause and carry out minor duties in aid. The special reward of such self-sacrifice is high spiritual rank, and special forgiveness and mercy, as proceeding from the direct approbation and love of God.

615. The immediate occasion for this passage was the question of migration (*hijrat*) from places where Islam was being persecuted and suppressed. Obviously the duty of Muslims was to leave such places, even if it involved forsaking their homes, and join and strengthen the Muslim community among whom they could live in peace and with whom they could help in fighting the evils around them. But the meaning is wider. Islam does not say: "Resist not evil." On the contrary it requires a constant, unceasing struggle against evil. For such struggle it may be necessary to forsake home and unite and organize and join our brethren in assaulting and overthrowing the fortress of evil. For the Muslim's duty is not only to enjoin good but to prohibit evil. To make our assault we must be prepared to put ourselves in a position from which such assault would be possible, and God's earth is spacious enough for the purpose. "Position" includes not only local position, but moral and material position. For example, we must shun evil company where we cannot put it down, but organize a position from which we can put it down.

98. Except those who are
(Really) weak and oppressed—
Men, women, and children—
Who have no means
In their power, nor a guide-post⁶¹⁶
To direct their way.

٩٨- إِلَّا الْمُسْتَظْفِقِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَ
النِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً
وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا ۝

99. For these, there is hope
That God will forgive :
For God doth blot out (sins)
And forgive again and again.

٩٩- فَأُولَٰئِكَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَعْفُو عَنْهُمْ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا ۝

100. He who forsakes his home
In the cause of God,
Finds in the earth
Many a refuge,
Wide and spacious :
Should he die
As a refugee from home
For God and His Apostle,
His reward becomes due
And sure with God :
And God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

١٠٠- وَمَنْ يُلْهِجْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرْعًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً
وَمَنْ يُخْرِجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُوَدِّعْهُ اللَّهُ
فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُوًّا رَحِيمًا ۝

SECTION 15.

101. ~~When~~ When ye travel
Through the earth,
There is no blame on you
If ye shorten your prayers,⁶¹⁷
For fear the Unbelievers
May attack you :
For the Unbelievers are
Unto you open enemies.

١٠١- وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ
الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدًا مُبِينًا ۝

616. If through physical, mental, or moral incapacity, we are unable to fight the good fight, we must rest content with putting up with evil and just guarding ourselves from it. God's gracious Mercy will recognise and forgive our weakness if it is real weakness, and not merely an excuse.

617. Verse 101 gives permission to shorten congregational prayers when people are on a journey: vv. 102-104 deal with cases when they are in danger at war, in face of the enemy. The shortening of congregational prayers in both cases is further governed as to details by the practice of the Apostle and his Companions. As to journeys, two questions arise: (1) what constitutes a journey for this purpose? (2) is the fear of an attack an essential condition for the shortening of congregational prayers? As to (1), it is best to leave the matter to discretion, having regard to all the circumstances of the journey, as in the case of the journeys which excuse a fast: see ii. 184, n. 190. The text leaves it to discretion. As to (2), the practice of the Apostle shows that danger is not an essential condition: it is merely mentioned as a possible incident. The Apostle usually shortened the prayers from four Rak'ats to two Rak'ats in *Zuhr* (midday prayer), *Ahr* (afternoon prayer) and *'Isha* (night prayer): the other two are in any case short, *Fajr* (morning prayer) having two Rak'ats and *Magrib* (evening prayer) having three.

102. When thou (Oh Apostle)
Art with them, and standest
To lead them in prayer,
Let one party of them
Stand up (in prayer) with thee,
Taking their arms with them :
When they finish
Their prostrations, let them
Take their position in the rear,
And let the other party come up—
Which hath not yet prayed—
And let them pray with thee,
Taking all precautions,
And bearing arms :
The Unbelievers wish,
If ye were negligent
Of your arms and your baggage,
To assault you in a single rush.⁶¹⁸
But there is no blame on you
If ye put away your arms
Because of the inconvenience
Of rain or because ye are ill ;
But take (every) precaution
For yourselves. For the
Unbelievers
God hath prepared
A humiliating punishment.

103. When ye pass⁶¹⁹
(Congregational) prayers,
Celebrate God's praises,
Standing, sitting down,
Or lying down on your sides ;
But when ye are free
From danger, set up
Regular Prayers :
For such prayers
Are enjoined on Believers
At stated times.

١٠٢- وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقِمْ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ
فَلْيُتِمَّ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ مَعَكَ
وَلْيَأْخُذُوا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا
فَلْيَكُونُوا مِنْ وَرَائِكُمْ وَلْتَأْتِ طَائِفَةٌ
أُخْرَى لَمْ يُصَلُّوا فَلْيُصَلُّوا مَعَكَ
وَلْيَأْخُذُوا حِذْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ
وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ
فَيْغْلِبُوا أَجْزَأً وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ
إِنْ كَانَ بِكُمْ أَذًى مِنْ مَطَرٍ
أَوْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَى
أَنْ تَضَعُوا أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ
وَتُحْذَرُوا جُزْءَكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ أََعْلَمُ بِالْكَافِرِينَ عَدَا بَاءُ مُهَيَّنًا
١٠٣- فَإِذَا أَقَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ
فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَمًا
وَأَقْعُدُوا عَلَى جُنُوبِكُمْ
فَإِذَا أَطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا
مُتَوَقُّتًا

618. The congregational prayer in danger in face of the enemy rests on the principle that the congregation should be divided into two parties; one party prays while the other watches the enemy, and then the second party comes up to prayers while the first falls back to face the enemy; either party does only one or two Rak'ats, or about half the congregational prayer; every precaution is taken to prevent a rush by the enemy; even while at prayers armour and arms need not be put off except when rain is likely to cause inconvenience to the wearer and damage to the arms, or when illness or fatigue causes the wearer's strength to fail. Details can be varied according to circumstances, as was actually done by the Apostle at different times.

619. Two interpretations are possible: (1) "when ye have finished congregational prayers", or (2) "when (on account of extreme danger) ye have to pass over congregational prayers altogether,—even the shorter form indicated for times of danger". I prefer the latter, as it accords better with the following sentence, which allows you to remember God individually in any posture possible during the danger. But when the danger is past, the full prayers should be offered at the stated times.

104. And slacken not
In following up the enemy :
If ye are suffering hardships,
They are suffering similar
Hardships ; but ye have
Hope from God, while they ⁶²⁰
Have none. And God
Is full of knowledge and wisdom.

١٠٤- وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقُوَى
إِنْ تَكُونُوا تَأْلُمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلُمُونَ كَمَا
تَأْلُمُونَ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ۝

- C. 66.—Beware of treachery, that would use
(iv. 105—126.) The good and pious for its wicked
Ends : its plots will but recoil
On its own head. The righteous
Have no cause for secrecy, except
In doing good. 'Tis evil that
Misleads, deceives, and even dares
Deface fair Nature, as by God
Created. Shun all evil, and be firm
In righteousness and faith in God.

SECTION 16.

105. ~~We~~ We have sent down
To thee the Book in truth,
That thou mightest judge
Between men, as guided
By God : so be not (used)
As an advocate by those
Who betray their trust ; ⁶²¹
106. But seek the forgiveness
Of God ; for God is
Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

١٠٥- إِنْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ
لَيَحْكُمَنَّ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ
بِمَا أَرْسَلَ اللَّهُ
وَلَا تَكُنْ لِلْخَافِينَ خَصِيمًا ۝
١٠٦- وَاسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ۝

620. Religion should be a source of strength and not of weakness in all our affairs. If we have to struggle hard and suffer hardships, those without faith have to do the same, with this difference, that the man of Faith is full of hope in God, whereas the man without Faith has nothing to sustain him.

621. The Commentators explain this passage with reference to the case of Ta'ima ibn Ubairaq, who was nominally a Muslim but really a Hypocrite, and given to all sorts of wicked deeds. He was suspected of having stolen a set of armour, and when the trail was hot, he planted the stolen property into the house of a Jew, where it was found. The Jew denied the charge and accused Ta'ima, but the sympathies of the Muslim community were with Ta'ima on account of his nominal profession of Islam. The case was brought to the Apostle, who acquitted the Jew according to the strict principle of justice, as "guided by God". Attempts were made to prejudice him and deceive him into using his authority to favour Ta'ima.

The general lesson is that the righteous man is faced with all sorts of subtle wiles : the wicked will try to appeal to his highest sympathies and most honourable motives to deceive him and use him as an instrument for defeating justice. He should be careful and cautious, and seek the help of God for protection against deception and for firmness in dealing the strictest justice without fear or favour. To do otherwise is to betray a sacred trust : the trustee must defeat all attempts made to mislead him.

107. Contend not on behalf
Of such as betray
Their own souls ; ⁶²²
For God loveth not
One given to perfidy
And crime ;

١٠٧- وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَلُونَ
أَنْفُسَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
مَنْ كَانَ خَوَّانًا أَجِيمًا ۝

108. They may hide
(Their crimes) from men,
But they cannot hide
(Them) from God, seeing that
He is in their midst
When they plot by night,
In words that He cannot
Approve : and God
Doth compass round ⁶²³
All that they do.

١٠٨- يَسْتَكْفُرُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ
وَلَا يَسْتَكْفُرُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبْتَئُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَى
مِنَ الْقَوْلِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا ۝

109. Ah ! these are the sort
Of men on whose behalf
Ye may contend in this world ;
But who will contend with God
On their behalf on the Day
Of Judgment, or who
Will carry their affairs through ?

١٠٩- هَآؤُنَّ هُمُ الْفَٰرِقُونَ
جَدَلْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا
فَمَنْ يُجَادِلُ اللَّهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ
أَمْ مَنْ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلًا ۝

110. If any one does evil
Or wrongs his own soul,
But afterwards seeks
God's forgiveness, he will find
God Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

١١٠- وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ
ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ
يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ۝

111. And if any one earns ⁶²⁴
Sin, he earns it against

١١١- وَ مَنْ يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُهُ

622. Our souls are a sort of trust with us. We have to guard them against all temptation. Those who surrender to crime or evil betray that trust. We are warned against being deceived into taking their part, induced either by plausible appearances, or by such incentives to partiality as that they belong to our own people or that some link connects them with us, whereas when we are out to do justice, we must not allow any irrelevant considerations to sway us.

623. The plots of sinners are known fully to God, and He can fully circumvent them if necessary, according to the fulness of His wisdom. The word used is : *Compass them round* : *muḥīṭ* : not only does God know all about it, but He is all round it : if in His wisdom He allows it, it is not because He has not complete control over it, but because, having it as it were enclosed in a complete circle, He can use it to further His own Plan. Even out of evil He can bring good.

624. *Kasaba* = to earn, to gain, to work for something valuable, to lay up a provision for the future life. We do a day's labour to earn our livelihood : so in a spiritual sense, whatever good or evil we do in this life, earns us good or evil in the life to come. In vv. 110-112 three cases are considered : (1) if we do ill and repent, God will forgive ; (2) if we do ill and do not repent, thinking that we can hide it, we are wrong ; nothing is hidden from God, and we shall suffer the full consequences in the life to come, for we can never evade our personal responsibility ; (3) if we do ill, great or small, and impute it to another, our original responsibility for the ill remains, but we add to it something else ; for we tie round our necks the guilt of falsehood, which converts even our minor fault into a great sin, and in any case brands us even in this life with shame and ignominy.

His own soul : for God
Is full of knowledge and wisdom.

عَلَى نَفْسِهِ ۖ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

112. But if any one earns
A fault or a sin
And throws it on to one
That is innocent,
He carries (on himself)
(Both) a falsehood
And a flagrant sin.

۱۱۲- وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا
ثُمَّ يَرْمِهَا بِرِيئًا
فَقَدْ احْتَمَلَ بُهْتَانًا
وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا ۝

SECTION 17.

113. But for the Grace of God
To thee and His Mercy,
A party of them would
Certainly have plotted
To lead thee astray.
But (in fact) they will only
Lead their own souls astray,
And to thee they can do
No harm in the least.
For God hath sent down
To thee the Book and Wisdom,
And taught thee what thou
Knewest not (before) :
And great is the Grace
Of God unto thee.

۱۱۳- وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ
وَرَحْمَتُهُ
لَهَكَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُضِلُّوكَ ۖ
وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
وَمَا يَصُرُّونَكَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۖ
وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ ۖ
وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا ۝

114. In most of their secret talks
There is no good : but if
One exhorts to a deed
Of charity or justice
Or conciliation between men, ⁶²⁵
(Secrecy is permissible) :
To him who does this,
Seeking the good pleasure
Of God, We shall soon give
A reward of the highest (value).

۱۱۴- لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنْ نَجْوَاهُمْ
إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ
أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۖ
وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ
فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۝

625. Usually secrecy is for evil ends, or from questionable motives, or because the person seeking secrecy is ashamed of himself and knows that if his acts or motives became known, he would make himself odious. Islam therefore disapproves of secrecy and loves and enjoins openness in all consultations and doings. But there are three things in which secrecy is permissible, and indeed laudable, provided the motive be purely unselfish, to earn "the good pleasure of God": (1) if you are doing a deed of charity or beneficence, whether in giving material things or in helping in moral, intellectual, or spiritual matters; here publicity may not be agreeable to the recipient of your beneficence, and you have to think of his feelings; (2) where an unpleasant act of justice or correction has to be done; this should be done, but there is no virtue in publishing it abroad and causing humiliation to some parties or adding to their humiliation by publicity; (3) where there is a delicate question of conciliating parties to a quarrel; they may be very touchy about publicity but quite amenable to the influence of a man acting in private.

115. If anyone contends with
The Apostle even after
Guidance has been plainly
Conveyed to him, and follows
A path other than that
Becoming to men of Faith,
We shall leave him
In the path he has chosen,
And land him in Hell,—
What an evil refuge!

۱۱۵- وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَى
وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ
مَا تَوَلَّى وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ
وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ۝

SECTION 18.

116. God forgiveth not
(The sin of) joining other gods⁶²⁶
With Him; but He forgiveth
Whom He pleaseth other sins
Than this: one who joins
Other gods with God,
Hath strayed far, far away
(From the Right).
117. (The Pagans), leaving Him,
Call upon female deities: ⁶²⁷
They call upon Satan
The persistent rebel!
118. God did curse him,
But he said: "I will take
Of Thy servants a portion⁶²⁸
Marked off;
119. "I will mislead them,⁶²⁹
And I will create

۱۱۶- إِنْ اِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ اَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ
وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ
فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ۝

۱۱۷- اِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ الْاِلهِ اِنثًا
وَاِنْ يَدْعُونَ الْاِشْيَاطَ مَرِيَدًا ۝

۱۱۸- لَعَنَهُ اللّٰهُ وَقَالَ لَا يُخَدِّعُ مَنْ
عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ۝

۱۱۹- وَلَا ضَلٰكَتَهُمْ وَلَا مُمْيِنَهُمْ

626. Cf. iv. 48 and n. 569. Blasphemy in the spiritual kingdom is like treason in the political kingdom.

627. The unity, power, and goodness of God are so manifest in nature and in the human mind when it is in accord with the universal spirit, that only the most abject perversion can account for the sin of spiritual treason. That sin arises from perverted ideas of sex or perverted ideas of self. The perversion of sex is to suppose that sex rules in spiritual matters. From it arise such horrible creations of the imagination as Kālī, the blood-thirsty goddess of India, or Hecate, the goddess of revenge and hate in Greek mythology. Even in beautiful forms like Saraswattī (the goddess of learning) or Minerva (the virgin goddess of sport and arts), to say nothing of Venus (the goddess of carnal pleasures), the emphasis laid on sex destroys a right view of spiritual nature. Perverted ideas of self are typified in the story of Satan, who was so puffed up with arrogance that he disobeyed God, and God cursed him. Both these perversions, if allowed lodgment, completely ruin our spiritual nature and deface God's handiwork. Hence it is not merely an outer sin but one that corrupts us through and through.

628. Satan obtained God's permission to tempt man, and this was implied in such free-will as was granted to man by God. Satan's boast is that the portion of mankind seduced by him will be so corrupted in their nature that they will bear a sort of brand that will mark them off as his own; or that they will be like a portion assigned to himself.

629. Satan's deceptions are with false desires, false superstitions, and false fears.

In them false desires ; I will
Order them to slit the ears ⁶³⁰
Of cattle, and to deface
The (fair) nature created ⁶³¹
By God." Whoever,
Forsaking God, takes Satan
For a friend, hath
Of a surety suffered
A loss that is manifest.

120. Satan makes promises,
And creates false hopes;
But Satan's promises
Are nothing but deception.

121. They (his dupes)
Will have their dwelling
In Hell, and from it
They will find no way
Of escape.

122. But those who believe
And do deeds of righteousness,—
We shall soon admit them
To Gardens, with rivers
Flowing beneath,—to dwell
Therein for ever.
God's promise is the truth,
And whose word can be
Truer than God's?

123. ~~Do~~ not your desires, nor ^{those}
Of the People of the Book

وَلَا مَرْكَبُهُمْ فَلْيَرْجِعْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ
وَلَا مَرْكَبُهُمْ فَلْيَرْجِعْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ
وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا
فَمِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُبِينًا ۝

۱۲۰- يَعِدُّهُمْ وَيُؤْتِيهِمْ
وَمَا يَعِدُّهُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ۝

۱۲۱- أُولَئِكَ مَا وَلَّهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ
وَلَا يَجِدُونَ عَنْهَا مَخْرِصًا ۝

۱۲۲- وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۖ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقًّا
وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا ۝

۱۲۳- لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِي أَهْلِ

630. Slitting the ears of cattle is just one instance of the superstitions to which men become slaves when they run after false gods. Astrology, magic, and vain beliefs in things that do not exist lead men away from the one true God.

631. To deface the (fair) nature created by God: there is both a physical and a spiritual meaning. We see many kinds of defacements practised on men and animals, against their true nature as created by God, partly on account of superstition, partly on account of selfishness. Spiritually the case is even worse. How many natures are dwarfed or starved and turned from their original instincts by cruel superstitions or customs? God created man pure: the Evil One defaces the image.

632. Personal responsibility is again and again insisted on as the key-note of Islam. In this are implied faith and right conduct. Faith is not an external thing: it begins with an act of will, but if true and sincere, it affects the whole being, and leads to right conduct. In this it is distinguished from the kind of faith which promises salvation because some one else in whom you are asked to believe has borne away the sins of men, or the kind of faith which says that because you are born of a certain race ("Children of Abraham") or a certain caste, you are privileged, and your conduct will be judged by a different standard from that of other men. Whatever you are, if you do evil, you must suffer the consequences, unless God's Mercy comes to your help.

(Can prevail) : whoever
Works evil, will be
Required accordingly.
Nor will he find, besides God,
Any protector or helper.

الْكُتَيْبُ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ
وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

124. If any do deeds
Of righteousness,—
Be they male or female—
And have faith,
They will enter Heaven,
And not the least injustice⁶³³
Will be done to them.

۱۲۴- وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ
مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ اُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ
وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا

125. Who can be better
In religion than one
Who submits his whole self
To God, does good,
And follows the way
Of Abraham the true in faith ?
For God did take
Abraham for a friend.⁶³⁴

۱۲۵- وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا
وَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ
وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا
وَاتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا

126. But to God belong all things
In the heavens and on earth :
And He it is that
Encompasseth all things.⁶³⁵

۱۲۶- وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطًا

- C. 67.—Justice to women and orphans
(iv. 127-152). Is part of religion and the fear
Of God. Stand out firmly
For justice to all, even against
Yourselves or your nearest of kin.
Remain firm in faith, and consort not
With evil or hypocrisy. Be true
In speech, and wound not others :
Nor distinguish between Teachers of Truth,
For God's Truth is one and should be believed.

633. *Naqir*—the groove in a date-stone, a thing of no value whatever. Cf. n. 575 to iv. 53.

634. Abraham is distinguished in Muslim theology with the title of "Friend of God". This does not of course mean that he was anything more than a mortal. But his faith was pure and true, and his conduct was firm and righteous in all circumstances. He was the fountain and origin of the three streams of religious thought, which were afterwards crystallised in the institutions of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad the Chosen One.

635. *Muḥīṭ*. Cf. iv. 106, and n. 623.

SECTION 19.

127. **They** ask thee concerning
The Women. Say : God
Doth instruct you about them :
And (remember) what hath
Been rehearsed unto you ⁶³⁶
In the Book, concerning
The orphans of women to whom
Ye give not the portions
Prescribed, and yet whom ye
Desire to marry, as also
Concerning the children
Who are weak and oppressed : ⁶³⁷
That ye stand firm
For justice to orphans.
There is not a good deed
Which ye do, but God
Is well-acquainted therewith.

128. **If** a wife fears
Cruelty or desertion
On her husband's part,
There is no blame on them
If they arrange
An amicable settlement
Between themselves ;
And such settlement is best ;

١٢٧- وَيَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاءِ
قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِيهِنَّ
وَمَا يُنْتَلِ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ
فِي يَمْحَى النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي
لَا تُؤْتُونَهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ
وَتَرْغَبُونَ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ
وَالسُّتْضَعُفِينَ مِنَ الْوِلْدَانِ
وَأَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلْيَتَامَى بِالْقِسْطِ
وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا ٥

١٢٨- وَإِنْ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ
مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا
أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا
وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ ٥

636. Again and again is it impressed on the community of Islam to be just in their dealings with women, orphans, children, and all whose weakness requires special consideration. The law about widows and orphans, inheritance, dower, and marriage had already been declared in iv. 2-35, and further instructions are now given on a further reference. The words translated *orphans of women* mean I think the orphaned children of widows, of whom there were several after the battle of Uhud, and whom it was the duty of the community to provide for. But some Commentators take them to mean "female orphans". In any case, because women were orphans or widows, it was not right that anyone should take advantage of their helpless position to deprive them of dower or of their portion in inheritance.

637. Cf. iv. 75, n. 592.

Both widows and orphans are to be helped because they are ordinarily weak, ill-treated, and oppressed. In communities which base their civil rights on brute strength, the weaker go to the wall, and public opinion expects nothing else. In Nietzsche's philosophy of the Superman that doctrine is stressed strongly, and some of the militarist nations in our own time seem inclined to support this reversion to our primitive instincts. Even in modern democracies of the saner sort, we are often told that it is the fate of minorities to suffer: strength of numbers here becomes the passport to power and privilege. Islam, while upholding sane manly views in general, enjoins the most solicitous care for the weak and oppressed in every way—in rights of property, in social rights, and in the right to opportunities of development. Spiritual strength or weakness does not necessarily go with physical or numerical strength.

Even though men's souls
Are swayed by greed.⁶³⁸
But if ye do good
And practise self-restraint,
God is well-acquainted
With all that ye do.

وَأَحْضَرْتُ الْأَنْفُسَ الشَّهِۜرَۃَ
وَأِنْ تَحْسِنُوا وَتَقْوُوا
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًاۙ

129. Ye are never able
To be fair and just
As between women,
Even if it is
Your ardent desire :
But turn not away
(From a woman) altogether,
So as to leave her (as it were)
Hanging (in the air).⁶³⁹
If ye come to a friendly
Understanding, and practise
Self-restraint, God is
Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

١٢٩- وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا
أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ
وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ
فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمِيلِ
فَتَذَرُوهُنَّ كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِۙ
وَأِنْ تَصْلَحْهُنَّ وَتَتَّقُوا
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًاۙ

130. But if they disagree
(And must part), God
Will provide abundance
For all from His
All-reaching bounty :
For God is He
That careth for all
And is Wise.

١٣٠- وَإِنْ يَتَفَرَّقَا
يُعْجِزِ اللَّهُ كُلًّا مِّنْ سَعَتِهِۦ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ وَاسِعًا حَكِيمًاۙ

131. **ALL**o God belong all things
In the heavens and on earth.⁶⁴⁰

١٣١- وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِۙ

638. To protect the woman's economic interests, various rules are prescribed for dower in marriage. But the sanctity of marriage itself is greater than any economic interests. Divorce is, of all things permitted, most hateful to God. Therefore if a breach between husband and wife can be prevented by some economic consideration, it is better to make that concession than to imperil the future of the wife, the children, and probably the husband also. Such concessions are permissible, in view of the love of wealth ingrained in unregenerate man, but a recommendation is made that we should practise self-restraint, and do what we can to come to an amicable settlement without any economic sacrifice on the part of the woman.

639. In this material world there are two principal causes of division between man and wife, money and "the other woman" or "the other man". Money was dealt with in the last verse. Here is the case of "the other woman". Legally more than one wife (up to four) are permissible on the condition that the man can be perfectly fair and just to all. But this is a condition almost impossible to fulfil. If, in the hope that he might be able to fulfil it, a man puts himself in that impossible position, it is only right to insist that he should not discard one but at least fulfil all the outward duties that are incumbent on him in respect of her.

640. Notice the refrain: "To God belong all things in the heavens and on earth": repeated three times, each time with a new application. In the first instance it follows the statement of God's universal providence and love. If two persons, in spite of every sincere desire to love and comfort each other, fail to achieve that end, and have to separate, God's all-reaching bounty never fails, for He is the Lord of all things. In the second instance it is connected with God's Self existence, Self-excellence, and independence of all creatures: all His commands are for our good, and they are given to all His creatures, according to their capacities. In the third instance, it is connected with His universal power; for He could destroy any individual or nation and create a new one without any loss to Himself; but He gives a chance to a again and again, and even rewards them beyond their own ambitions.

Verily We have directed
The People of the Book
Before you, and you (Oh Muslims)
To fear God. But if ye
Deny Him, lo! unto God
Belong all things
In the heavens and on earth,
And God is free
Of all wants, worthy⁶⁴¹
Of all praise.

132. Yea, unto God belong
All things in the heavens
And on earth, and enough
Is God to carry through⁶⁴²
All affairs.

133. If it were His Will,
He could destroy you,
Oh mankind, and create
Another race; for He
Hath power this to do.

134. If any one desires
A reward in this life,
In God's (gift) is the reward
(Both) of this life
And of the Hereafter :⁶⁴³
For God is He that heareth
And seeth (all things).

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
وَأَيُّكُمْ أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَأِنْ تَكْفُرُوا
فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمُوتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا ۝

۱۳۲- وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمُوتِ
وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ۝

۱۳۳- إِنْ يَشَاءْ يُدْهِبْكُمْ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ
وَيَأْتِ بِآخَرِينَ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَلِكَ قَدِيرًا ۝

۱۳۴- مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا
فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ ثَوَابُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ۝

641. God's existence is absolute existence. It does not depend on any other person or any other thing. And it is worthy of all praise, for it is all-good and comprises every possible excellence. It is necessary to stress this point in order to show that the moral law for man is not a mere matter of transcendental commands, but really rests on the essential needs of mankind itself. If therefore such schools of thought as Behaviourism proved their theories up to the hilt, they do not affect the position of Islam in the least. The highest ethical standards are enjoined by Islam, not as dogmatic imperatives, but because they can be shown to follow from the needs of man's nature and the results of man's experience.

642. This refers to the next verse. He does not need us, but we need Him. Our hopes, our happiness, our success centre in Him; but He is Self-sufficient. He has the power to supersede us, but His goodness is ever seeking to give us every chance in this world as well as in the Hereafter.

643. Man in this life can only see up to the horizon of this life. The highest rewards which his wishes or ambitions can conceive of are conceived in the terms of this life. But God can give him not only these but something infinitely higher,—the rewards of the Hereafter,—which it did not even enter his heart to ask for or his imagination to conceive.

SECTION 20.

135. Oh ye who believe !
 Stand out firmly
 For justice, as witnesses ⁶⁴⁴
 To God, even as against
 Yourself, or your parents,
 Or your kin, and whether
 It be (against) rich or poor : ⁶⁴⁵
 For God can best protect both.
 Follow not the lusts
 Of your hearts, lest ye
 Swerve, and if ye
 Distort (justice) or decline
 To do justice, verily
 God is well-acquainted
 With all that ye do.

136. Oh ye who believe !
 Believe in God
 And His Apostle,
 And the scripture which He
 Hath sent to His Apostle
 And the scripture which He sent
 To those before (him). ⁶⁴⁶
 Any who denieth God,
 His angels, His Books,
 His Apostles, and the Day
 Of Judgment, hath gone
 Far, far astray.

۱۳۵- يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُوْنُوْا قَوَّٰمِيْنَ
 بِالْقِسْطِ شٰهَدَآءَ لِلّٰهِ
 وَلَوْ عَلٰى اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَوْ الْوَالِدِيْنَ
 وَالْاَقْرَبِيْنَ اِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا اَوْ فَقِيْرًا
 فَاللّٰهُ اَوْلٰى بِهِمَا
 فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوٰى
 اِنْ تَعَدَلُوْا
 وَاِنْ تَلَوْا اَوْ بَعَرَضُوْا
 فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرًا

۱۳۶- يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
 اٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ
 وَالْكِتٰبِ الَّذِى نَزَّلَ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهِ
 وَالْكِتٰبِ الَّذِى اَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
 وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِاللّٰهِ
 وَمَلٰٓئِكَتِهٖ وَكِتٰبِهٖ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ
 وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ
 فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلٰلًا بَعِيْدًا

644. Justice is God's attribute, and to stand firm for justice is to be a witness to God, even if it is detrimental to our own interests (as we conceive them) or the interests of those who are near and dear to us. According to the Latin saying, "Let justice be done though heaven should fall".

But Islamic justice is something higher than the formal justice of Roman Law or any other human Law. It is even more penetrative than the subtler justice in the speculations of the Greek Philosophers. It searches out the innermost motives, because we are to act as in the presence of God, to whom all things, acts, and motives are known.

645. Some people may be inclined to favour the rich, because they expect something from them. Some people may be inclined to favour the poor because they are generally helpless. Partiality in either case is wrong. Be just, without fear or favour. Both the rich and the poor are under God's protection as far as their legitimate interests are concerned, but they cannot expect to be favoured at the expense of others. And He can protect their interests far better than any man.

646. If your belief is by habit or birth or the example of those you love or respect or admire, make that belief more specific and personal to yourself. We must not only have faith, but realise that faith in our inmost being. The chief objects of our Faith are God, His Apostle, and His Revelations. To all these we must give a home in our hearts. The angels we do not see and realise as we realise God, who is nearer to us than the vehicle of our life-blood, and the Day of Judgment is for our future experience, but we must not deny them, or we cut off a part of our spiritual view.

137. Those who believe,
Then reject Faith,
Then believe (again)
And (again) reject Faith,
And go on increasing
In Unbelief,—God
Will not forgive them
Nor guide them on the Way.⁶⁴⁷
138. To the Hypocrites give
The glad tidings that
There is for them
(But) a grievous Penalty ;—
139. Yea, to those who take
For friends Unbelievers
Rather than Believers :
Is it honour they seek
Among them ? Nay,—
All honour is with God."⁶⁴⁸
140. Already have We sent you⁶⁴⁹
Word in the Book, that when
Ye hear the Signs of God
Held in defiance and ridicule,
Ye are not to sit with them
Unless they turn to a different
Theme : if ye did, ye would be
Like them. For God will
Collect the Hypocrites and those
Who defy Faith—all in Hell ;—

۱۳۷-إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا
ثُمَّ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا
ثُمَّ أَزْدَادُوا كُفْرًا
لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ يَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ
وَلَا يَهْدِيَهُمْ سَبِيلًا ۝

۱۳۸-يُبَشِّرُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ
بِأَن لَّهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝

۱۳۹-الَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ
مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
أَيَنْتَعُونَ عِنْدَهُمُ الْعِزَّةَ
فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ۝
۱۴۰-وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَن إِذَا
سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتَ اللَّهِ يَكْفُرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا
فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ
حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۝
إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا أَثْمَلْتُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ جَلَمَةُ السُّفُوفِينَ
وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ۝

647. Those who go on changing sides again and again can have no real Faith at any time. Their motives are mere worldly double-dealing. How can they expect God's grace or forgiveness?

Here is a clear warning against those who make their religion a mere matter of worldly convenience. True religion goes far deeper. It transforms the very nature of man. After that transformation it is as impossible for him to change as it is for light to become darkness.

648. If the motive is some advantage, some honour,—the fountain of all good is God. How can it really be expected from those who deny Faith? And if there is some show of worldly honour, what is it worth against the contempt they earn in the spiritual world?

649. Cf. vi. 68, an earlier Meccan verse.

Where we see or hear Truth held in light esteem, we ought to make our protest and withdraw from such company, not out of arrogance, as if we thought ourselves superior to other people, but out of real humility, lest our own nature be corrupted in such society. But it is possible that our protest or our sincere remonstrance may change the theme of discourse. In that case we have done good to those who were inclined to hold Truth in light esteem, for we have saved them for ridiculing Truth.

141. These are the ones who
Wait and watch about you :
If ye do gain
A victory from God,
They say : " Were we not
With you ?"—but if
The Unbelievers gain
A success, they say
(To them) : " Did we not
Gain an advantage over you,
And did we not guard
You from the Believers ?"
But God will judge
Betwixt you on the Day
Of Judgment. And never
Will God grant
To the Unbelievers
A way (to triumph)
Over the Believers.⁶⁵⁰

١٤١- الَّذِينَ يَتَرَبَّصُونَ بِكُمْ
فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فَتْحٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ
قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ
وَإِنْ كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ
قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَسْتَعِذْ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَنَنْتَعِزَّكُمْ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا

SECTION 21.

142. The Hypocrites—they think
They are over-reaching God,
But He will over-reach them :
When they stand up to prayer,
They stand without earnestness,
To be seen of men,
But little do they hold
God in remembrance ;

١٤٢- إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ
وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ
وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كَسَالًا
يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ
وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

143. (They are) distracted in mind
Even in the midst of it,—
Being (sincerely) for neither
One group nor for another.
Whom God leaves straying,—
Never wilt thou find

١٤٣- مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْكَ
لَكَ إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَلَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ
وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ يَهْدِيَ

650. The methods and motives of Hypocrisy are thoroughly unmasked here. It has no principles, but watches for an opportunity to turn any event to its own advantage. If battle is joined between two inconsistent principles, it has no belief in either, but watches the result. There is unceasing fight between Good and Evil in this world. If the Good seems to win, the hypocrites range themselves on its side with unctuous words, taking a great part of the credit to themselves. Perhaps the balance tips the other way later, and they have to make their peace with Evil. "Oh!" they say airily, "we were in the ranks of your enemy before, on purpose to protect you when they were too strong for you!" This may suit the ways of the world. But the day of their account will come eventually. For the Good must ultimately triumph.

For him the Way.⁶⁵¹

144. Oh ye who believe!
Take not for friends
Unbelievers rather than
Believers : do ye wish
To offer God an open
Proof against yourselves ?

145. The Hypocrites will be
In the lowest depths
Of the Fire : no helper
Wilt thou find for them ;—

146. Except for those who repent,
Mend (their life), hold fast
To God, and purify their religion
As in God's sight : if so
They will be (numbered)⁶⁵²
With the Believers.
And soon will God
Grant to the Believers
A reward of immense value.

147. What can God gain
By your punishment,
If ye are grateful
And ye believe ?
Nay, it is God
That recogniseth⁶⁵³

5 (All good), and knoweth

30 All things.

لَهُ سَبِيلًا ۝

١٤٣-يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكَافِرِينَ
أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَخْرَيْدُونَ
أَنْ تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا ۝

١٤٤-إِنَّ السُّفْهَانَ فِي الذَّلِيلِ الْأَسْفَلِ
مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ۝

١٤٥-إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا
وَاصْلَحُوا وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ
وَاخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ
فَالْوَلِيُّكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِي
اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۝

١٤٦-مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَدُوِّكُمْ
إِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَآمَنْتُمْ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ۝

651. If we choose evil deliberately and double our guilt by fraud and deception, we do not deceive God, but we deceive ourselves. We deprive ourselves of the Grace of God, and are left straying away from the Path. In that condition who can guide us or show us the Way ? Our true and right instincts become blunted ; our fraud makes us unstable in character ; when our fellow-men find out our fraud, any advantages we may have gained by the fraud are lost ; and we become truly distracted in mind.

652. Even Hypocrites can obtain forgiveness, on four conditions : (1) sincere repentance, which purifies their mind ; (2) amendment of their conduct, which purifies their outer life ; (3) steadfastness and devotion to God, which strengthens their faith and protects them from the assaults of evil ; and (4) sincerity in their religion, or their whole inner being, which brings them as full members into the goodly Fellowship of Faith.

653. There is no pleasure nor advantage to God in punishing His own creatures, over whom He watches with loving care. On the contrary He recognises any good—however little—which He finds in us, and delights to give us a reward beyond all measure. His recognition of us is compared by a bold metaphor to our gratitude to Him for His favours. The epithet *Shākir* is applied to God, as here, in ii. 158, and other passages. In xvi. 121 it is applied to Abraham : "he showed his gratitude for the favours of God, who chose him and guided him to a Straight Way."

148. God loveth not that evil
Should be noised abroad⁶⁵⁴
In public speech, except
Where injustice hath been
Done; for God
Is He who heareth
And knoweth all things.

149. Whether ye publish
A good deed or conceal it
Or cover evil with pardon,
Verily God doth blot out
(Sins) and hath power
(In the judgment of values).⁶⁵⁵

150. Those who deny God
And His apostles, and (those
Who) wish to separate
God from His apostles,
Saying: "We believe in some
But reject others":
And (those who) wish
To take a course midway,—⁶⁵⁶

151. They are in truth
(Equally) Unbelievers;

١٤٨- لا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ
الْقَوْلِ
إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلِمَ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا ۝

١٤٩- إِنْ تُبْدُوا خَيْرًا أَوْ تُخْفَوْهُ
أَوْ تُعْفُوا عَنْ سُوءٍ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا قَدِيرًا ۝

١٥٠- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ
وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُتَّخَذَ وَابِعٌ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ۝

١٥١- أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ حَقًّا ۝

654. We can make a public scandal of evil in many ways. (1) It may be idle sensation-mongering: it often leads to more evil by imitation, as where criminal deeds are glorified in a cinema, or talked about shamelessly in a novel or drama. (2) It may be malicious gossip of a personal kind: it does no good, but it hurts people's feelings. (3) It may be malevolent slander or libel: it is intended deliberately to cause harm to people's reputation or injure them in other ways, and is rightly punishable under all laws. (4) It may be a public rebuke or correction or remonstrance, without malice. (1), (2), and (3) are absolutely forbidden. (4) may be by a person in authority; in which case the exception applies, for all wrong or injustice must be corrected openly, to prevent its recurrence. Or (4) may be by a person not vested with authority, but acting either from motives of public spirit, or in order to help some one who has been wronged; here again the exception will apply. But if the motive is different, the exception does not apply. (4) would also include a public complaint by a person who has suffered a wrong; he has every right to seek public redress.

655. *Qadîr*: I have translated it more fully than most translators. The root *qadara* not only implies power, ability, strength, but two other ideas which it is difficult to convey in a single word, *viz.* the act and power of estimating the true value of a thing or persons, as in vi. 91; and the act and power of regulating something so as to bring it into correspondence with something. "Judgment of values" I think sums up these finer shades of meaning. God forgives what is wrong and is able fully to appreciate and judge of the value of our good deeds whether we publish them or conceal them.

656. Unbelief takes various forms. Three are mentioned here: (1) denial of God and His revelation to mankind through inspired men; (2) a sort of nominal belief in God and His apostles, but one which is partial, and mixed up with racial pride, which does not allow of the recognition of any apostles beyond those of a particular race; and (3) a nominal belief in universal revelation, but so hedged round with peculiar doctrines of exclusive salvation, that it practically approaches to a denial of God's universal love for all mankind and all Creation. All three amount to Unbelief, for they really deny God's universal love and care.

And We have prepared
For Unbelievers a humiliating
Punishment.

152. To those who believe
In God and His apostles
And make no distinction
Between any of the apostles,
We shall soon give
Their (due) rewards :
For God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

وَاعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ۝

۱۵۲- وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَلَمْ يَفْرِقُوا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ
أُولَٰئِكَ سَنُوْفُ يُؤْتِيهِمُ أَجْرَهُمْ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ۝

C. 68.—The People of the Book went wrong :
(iv. 153-176) The Jews in breaking their Covenant,
And slandering Mary and Jesus,
And in their usury and injustice ;
And the Christians in raising
Jesus the Apostle to equality
With God. God's revelation
Is continued in the Qurān,
Which comes with manifest proof
And a clear light to those who understand.

SECTION 22

153. ~~The~~ The People of the Book
Ask thee to cause
A book to descend
From heaven: indeed
They asked Moses
For an even greater
(Miracle), for they said :
"Show us God in public," 657
But they were dazed
For their presumption,
With thunder and lightning.
Yet they worshipped the calf
Even after Clear Signs
Had come to them ;
Even so We forgave them ;
And gave Moses manifest
Proofs of authority.

۱۵۳- يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ تُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ
كِتَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ
فَقَدْ سَأَلُوا مُوسَىٰ أَكْبَرَهُمْ مِنْ ذَلِكَ
فَقَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ جَاهِلُونَ
فَأَخَذْنَا لَهُمُ الضَّعِفَاءَ فِي طَلْفِهِمْ
ثُمَّ اخْتَلَوْا بِالْعِجْلِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمْ
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَعَفَوْنَا عَنْ ذَلِكَ
وَآتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ سُلْطَانًا مُّهِينًا ۝

657. Cf. ii. 55 and n., for the thunder and lightning which dazed those who were presumptuous enough to ask that they should see God face to face, and ii. 51 and n., for the worship of the golden calf.

The lesson is that it is presumptuous on the part of man to judge of spiritual things in terms of material things, or to ask to see God with their material eyes when God is above material forms and is independent of time and space.

154. And for their Covenant
We raised over them
The towering height
Of Mount (Sinai); ⁶⁵⁸
And (on another occasion)
We said: "Enter the gate
With humility"; and
(Once again) We commanded:
"Transgress not in the matter
Of the Sabbath."
And We took from them
A solemn Covenant.
155. (They have incurred divine ⁶⁵⁹
Displeasure): in that they
Broke their Covenant;
That they rejected the Signs
Of God; that they slew
The Messengers in defiance ⁶⁶⁰
Of right; that they said,
"Our hearts are the wrappings ⁶⁶¹
Which preserve God's Word;
We need no more";—nay,
God hath set the seal on their hearts
For their blasphemy,
And little is it they believe;—

۱۵۴- وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ
بَيْنَهُمْ
وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ
سُجَّدًا
وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوا فِي السَّبْتِ
وَآخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ۝

۱۵۵- فِيمَا أَنْفَضْنَاهُمْ مِنْهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ
وَكُفِّرْهُمْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَقَتْلِهِمُ الرُّسُلَ الْكَذِبَاءِ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ
وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ
بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ
فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝

156. That they rejected Faith;
That they uttered against Mary

۱۵۶- وَبِكُفْرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَى مَرْيَمَ

658. In this verse there is a recapitulation of three salient incidents of Jewish refractoriness already referred to in the second Sūra: viz. (1) the Covenant under the towering height of Sinai, ii. 63; (2) their arrogance where they were commanded humility in entering a town, ii. 58; and (3) their transgression of the Sabbath, ii. 65.

659. In verses 155, 156, 157, 160 (latter half), and 161 with parenthetical clauses including those in vv. 158-159, and 160 (first half), there is a catalogue of the iniquities of which the Jews were guilty, and for these iniquities we must understand some such words as: "They are under divine displeasure." Each clause of the indictment I have indicated by prefixing the word "that."

660. Cf. iii 21, and nn. 363 and 364.

661. Cf. ii. 88, and n. 92, where the full meaning is explained.

Note the crescendo (heightening effect) in the argument. Their iniquities were: (1) that they broke their Covenant; (2) that they rejected God's guidance as conveyed in His Signs; (3) that they killed God's Messengers and incurred a double guilt, viz., that of murder and that of a deliberate defiance of God's law; and (4) that they imagined themselves arrogantly self-sufficient, which means a blasphemous closing of their hearts for ever against the admission of God's grace. Then begins another series of iniquities from a different point of view: (1) that they rejected Faith; (2) that they made false charges against a saintly woman like Mary, who was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus; (3) that they boasted of having killed Jesus when they were victims of their own self-hallucination; (4) that they hindered people from God's way; and (5) that by means of usury and fraud they oppressed their fellow-men.

A grave false charge ; ⁶⁶²

157. That they said (in boast),
 " We killed Christ Jesus
 The son of Mary,
 The Apostle of God " ; —
 But they killed him not,
 Nor crucified him, ⁶⁶³
 But so it was made
 To appear to them,
 And those who differ
 Therein are full of doubts,
 With no (certain) knowledge,
 But only conjecture to follow,
 For of a surety
 They killed him not ; —

158. Nay, God raised him up ⁶⁶⁴
 Unto Himself ; and God
 Is Exalted, Wise ; —

159. And there is none
 Of the People of the Book

بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا ۝

١٥٧- وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى
 ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
 وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ
 وَذَانِ الذِّينِ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ
 لَغِيَ شَاكٍ مِنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ
 إِلَّا الظَّنَّ الْعَرِيقَ
 وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا ۝

١٥٨- بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ۝

١٥٩- وَلَا رَمٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ

662. The false charge against Mary was that she was unchaste. Cf. xix, 27-28. Such a charge is bad enough to make against any woman, but to make it against Mary, the mother of Jesus, was to bring into ridicule God's power itself. Islam is specially strong in guarding the reputation of women. Slandering of women are bound to bring four witnesses in support of their accusations, and if they fail to produce four witnesses, they are to be flogged with eighty stripes and debarred for ever from being competent witnesses : xxiv. 4.

663. The end of the life of Jesus on earth is as much involved in mystery as his birth, and indeed the greater part of his private life, except the three main years of his ministry. It is not profitable to discuss the many doubts and conjectures among the early Christian sects and among Muslim theologians. The Orthodox Christian Churches make it a cardinal point of their doctrine that his life was taken on the Cross, that he died and was buried, that on the third day he rose in the body with his wounds intact, and walked about and conversed, and ate with his disciples, and was afterwards taken up bodily to heaven. This is necessary for the theological doctrine of blood sacrifice and vicarious atonement for sins, which is rejected by Islam. But some of the early Christian sects did not believe that Christ was killed on the Cross. The Basilidans believed that some one else was substituted for him. The Docetæ held that Christ never had a real physical or natural body, but only an apparent or phantom body, and that his Crucifixion was only apparent, not real. The Marcionite Gospel (about A.D. 138) denied that Jesus was born, and merely said that he appeared in human form. The Gospel of St. Barnabas supported the theory of substitution on the Cross. The Quranic teaching is that Christ was not crucified nor killed by the Jews, notwithstanding certain apparent circumstances which produced that illusion in the minds of some of his enemies ; that disputations, doubts, and conjectures on such matters are vain ; and that he was taken up to God (see next verse and note).

664. There is difference of opinion as to the exact interpretation of this verse. The words are : The Jews did not kill Jesus, but God raised him up (*rafa'a*) to Himself. One school holds that Jesus did not die the usual human death, but still lives in the body in heaven ; another holds that he did die (v. 120) but not when he was supposed to be crucified, and that his being " raised up " unto God means that instead of being disgraced as a malefactor, as the Jews intended, he was on the contrary honoured by God as His Apostle : see also next verse. The same word *rafa'a* is used in association with honour in connection with Muḥammad in xciv. 4.

SECTION 23.

163. **W**e have sent thee
Inspiration, as We sent it
To Noah and the Messengers ⁶⁶⁸
After him : We sent
Inspiration to Abraham, ⁶⁶⁹
Ismā'il, Isaac, Jacob
And the Tribes, to Jesus,
Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon,
And to David We gave
The Psalms.

١٦٣- إِنْكَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ
كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ
وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَى وَأَيُّوبَ وَ
يُوسُفَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا

164. Of some apostles We have
Already told thee the story ;
Of others We have not ;—
And to Moses God spoke
direct ;— ⁶⁷⁰

١٦٤- وَرُسُلًا كَذَلِكَ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ
وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا

165. Apostles who gave good news
As well as warning,
That mankind, after (the coming)
Of the apostles, should have
No plea against God :
For God is Exalted, Wise.

١٦٥- رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِنَاسٍ
يَكُونُ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ
بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

166. **B**ut God beareth witness
That what He hath sent
Unto thee He hath sent
From His (own) knowledge, ⁶⁷²

١٦٦- لَكِنِ اللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ
أَنْزَلَهُ بِعِلْمِهِ وَالْمَلَكُ يَشْهَدُونَ

668. First we have a general statement : that inspiration was sent to many Messengers, and the inspiration was of the same kind as that sent to the Apostle Muhammad, for God's Message is one. Note that what is spoken of here is Inspiration, not necessarily a Book. Every nation or group of people had an apostle : x. 47. Some of these apostles have been mentioned by name in Islam, and some not : iv. 164.

669. Cf. ii. 136 and iii. 84. The list here given is in three groups (1) The first group, Abraham's family, is the same as in ii. 136 (where see the note) and in iii. 84. (2) Then we have the tragic figures of Jesus, Job, and Jonah, whose mission was from a worldly point of view unsuccessful. (3) Then we have Aaron the priest and Solomon the King, both great figures, but each subordinate to another primary figure, viz. Moses (mentioned in the next verse) and David (mentioned at the end of this verse), David's distinction was the Psalms, which are still extant. Though their present form may possibly be different from the original, and they do undoubtedly include Psalms not written by David, the collection contains much devotional poetry of a high order.

670. God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai through a cloud : Exod. xxxiv. 5. Hence the title of Moses in Muslim theology : *Kalīm-ullāh* : the one to whom God spoke.

671. Every apostle proclaims God's goodness to the righteous and forgiveness to those who repent, (good news), and the Wrath to come for those who reject Faith and live in iniquity (warning). Their mission of warning is a prelude and complement to their mission of good news. No one can then say that he or she did not know.

672. Inspiration, though it is clothed in human language, and shaped to the personality of the inspired one, proceeds from the knowledge of God, and therefore often contains more meaning than the inspired one himself realises.

And the angels bear witness :
But enough is God for a witness.

167. Those who reject Faith
And keep off (men)
From the Way of God,
Have verily strayed far,
Far away from the Path.

168. Those who reject Faith
And do wrong,—God
Will not forgive them
Nor guide them
To any way—

169. Except the way of Hell,
To dwell therein for ever.
And this to God is easy.⁶⁷³

170. Oh mankind! the Apostle
Hath come to you in truth
From God: believe in him:
It is best for you.⁶⁷⁴ But if
Ye reject Faith, to God
Belong all things in the heavens
And on earth: and God
Hath all knowledge and wisdom.

171. Oh People of the Book!
Commit no excesses⁶⁷⁵
In your religion: nor say
Of God what is untrue.

وَكُفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ۝

١٦٧- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
قَدْ ضَلُّوا ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ۝

١٦٨- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَظَلَمُوا
لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيُغْفِرْ لَهُمْ
وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيقًا ۝

١٦٩- إِلَّا طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا
وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ۝

١٧٠- يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الرَّسُولُ
بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَآمِنُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ وَإِنْ
تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ۝

١٧١- يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ
وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ ۝

673. *Easy*—not in the sense that God takes any pleasure in any of His creatures going astray. The contrary is the case: for God's Grace recognises all good in us to such an extent that it is compared to gratitude in iv. 147; see n. 653. We must understand *easy* in the sense that God is Supreme in knowledge and power; if any forces of rebellion foolishly think that they can evade punishment, they are mistaken. Punishment comes as a matter of course. It is not a matter of difficulty or exertion on the part of God.

674. God's solicitude for us is for our own good, not because He gets any advantage from it. For He is independent of all things, and everything declares His glory and praise.

675. Just as a foolish servant may go wrong by excess of zeal for his master, so in religion people's excesses may lead them to blasphemy or a spirit the very opposite of religion. The Jewish excesses in the direction of formalism, racialism, exclusiveness, and rejection of Christ Jesus have been denounced in many places. Here the Christian attitude is condemned, which raises Jesus to an equality with God; in some cases venerates Mary almost to idolatry; attributes a physical son to God; and invents the doctrine of the Trinity, opposed to all reason, which, according to the Athanasian Creed, unless a man believes, he is doomed to hell for ever. Let our Muslims also beware lest they fall into excesses either in doctrine or in formalism.

Christ Jesus the son of Mary
Was (no more than)
An apostle of God,
And His Word,
Which He bestowed on Mary,
And a Spirit proceeding
From Him: so believe
In God and His apostles.
Say not "Trinity": desist:⁶⁷⁶
It will be better for you:
For God is One God:
Glory be to Him:
(Far Exalted is He) above
Having a son. To Him
Belong all things in the heavens
And on earth. And enough
Is God as a Disposer of affairs.

SECTION 24.

172. Christ disdaineth not
To serve and worship God,⁶⁷⁷
Nor do the angels nearest
In rank (to God):
Those who disdain
His worship and are arrogant,—
He will gather them all
Together unto Himself⁶⁷⁸
(To answer).

173. But to those who believe
And do deeds of righteousness,
He will give their (due)
Rewards,— and more,
Out of His bounty:
But those who are
Disdainful and arrogant,
He will punish

إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِنْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ
الْقَاهُ إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ
فَأَمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ
إِنَّمَا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ
إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ
سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ
لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَكُفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا

١٧٢- لَنْ يَسْتَنْكَفَ الْمَسِيحُ
أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ
وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ
وَمَنْ يَسْتَنْكَفَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيَسْتَكْبِرْ
فَسَيَجْزِيهِمُ اللَّهُ جَزَاءً
١٧٣- فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
فَيُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرَهُمْ
وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْتَنكَفُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا

676. Christ's attributes are mentioned: (1) that he was the son of a woman, Mary, and therefore a man; (2) but an apostle, a man with a mission from God, and therefore entitled to honour; (3) a Word bestowed on Mary, for he was created by God's word "Be" (*kun*), and he was: iii. 59; (4) a spirit proceeding from God, but not God: his life and his mission were more limited than in the case of some other apostles, though we must pay equal honour to him as a man of God. The doctrines of Trinity, equality with God, and sonship are repudiated as blasphemies. God is independent of all needs and has no need of a son to manage His affairs. The Gospel of John (whoever wrote it) has put in a great deal of Alexandrian and Gnostic mysticism round the doctrine of the Word (Greek, *Logos*), but it is simply explained here, and our *Ḥuṭūṭ* work on this explanation.

677. Christ often watched and prayed, as a humble worshipper of God; and his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane was full of human dignity, suffering, and self-humiliation (see Matt. xxvi. 36-45).

678. The disdainful and the arrogant are the crew of Satan, who will be gathered together before the Supreme Throne for punishment.

With a grievous penalty;
Nor will they find,
Besides God, any
To protect or help them.

174. Oh, mankind! Verily
There hath come to you
A convincing proof
From your Lord:
For We have sent unto you
A light (that is) manifest.⁶⁷⁹

175. Then those who believe
In God, and hold fast
To Him,—soon will He
Admit them to Mercy
And Grace from Himself,⁶⁸⁰
And guide them to Himself
By a straight Way.

176. They ask thee
For a legal decision.
Say: God directs (thus)
About those who leave
No descendants or ascendants
As heirs. If it is a man⁶⁸¹
That dies, leaving a sister
But no child, she shall

فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَدَاوَةُ الْإِيمَانِ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ
لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ۝

۱۷۴- يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَانٌ
مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَآتَيْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُّبِينًا ۝

۱۷۵- فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ
وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ
فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ
وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۝
۱۷۶- يَسْأَلُونَكَ

قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي الْكَلَامِ
إِنْ أَمْرٌ أَهْلَكَ لَيْسَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ
وَلَهُ أُخْتٌ فَلَهَا

679. The Proof and the Light are the Qur'an and the Personality, Life, and Teaching of Muhammad Mustafa.

680. *From Himself*—From His Presence: see iii, 195 and n. 501. The Mercy and Grace are expressed here as specially flowing from Him.

681. This verse supplements the rule of inheritance to the estate of a deceased person who has left as heir neither a descendant nor an ascendant. We shall call such a person A, who may be either a male or a female. In iv. 12 (second half), A's case was considered where he had left uterine brothers or sisters. Here A's case is considered where he has left brothers and/or sisters by the father's side, whether the mother was the same or not. "Brothers" and "sisters" in this verse must be construed to be such brothers and sisters.

For the sake of clearness I have expanded the terse language of the original in the translation. Let me explain it more concretely in this note. A, and "brother" and "sister" being strictly defined as above, we proceed to consider how A's inheritance would be divided. If A left a widow or widower, the widow's or widower's share would first be calculated as in the first half of iv. 12; if A left no spouse, this calculation would not be necessary. Then if A left a single "sister," she would have a half share, the remaining half (in so far as it, or a part of it, does not fall to a spouse, if any) going to remoter heirs; if a single "brother," he would have the whole (subject to the spouse's right if there is a spouse); if more than one "brother," they divide the whole (subject to, etc.). If A left two or more "sisters," they get between them two-thirds, subject to the spouse's right, if any. If A left a "brother" and "sister," or "brothers" and "sisters," they divide on the basis that each "brother's" share is twice that of the "sister" (subject to, etc.). In all cases debts, funeral expenses, and legacies (to the amount allowed) have priority as in n. 522.

Have half the inheritance :
 If (such a deceased was)
 A woman, who left no child,
 Her brother takes her inheritance :
 If there are two sisters,
 They shall have two-thirds
 Of the inheritance
 (Between them) : if there are
 Brothers and sisters, (they share),
 The male having twice
 The share of the female.
 Thus doth God make clear
 To you (His law), lest
 Ye err. And God
 Hath knowledge of all things.

نُصِفَ مَا تَرَكَ
 وَهُوَ يَرِثُهَا
 إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهَا وَلَدٌ
 فَإِنْ كَانَتَا اثْنَتَيْنِ
 فَلَهُمَا الثُّلُثَانِ مِمَّا تَرَكَ وَلَنْ يَكُونَا الْخَوَاصَّ
 تَجَاوَزْنَا وَلَوْلَا كَرَمُ اللَّهِ حَقَّ الْأَنْفُسَيْنِ
 يَبَيِّنَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَضِلُّوا
 وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA V (*Māida*).

This Sūra deals, by way of recapitulation, with the backsliding of the Jews and Christians from their pure religions, to which the coping stone was placed by Islam. It refers particularly to the Christians, and to their solemn Sacrament of the Last Supper, to whose mystic meaning they are declared to have been false.

As a logical corollary to the corruption of the earlier religions of God, the practical precepts of Islam, about food, cleanliness, justice and fidelity are recapitulated.

The fourth verse contains the memorable declaration: "This day have I perfected your religion for you": which was promulgated in 10 H., during the Apostle's last Pilgrimage to Mecca. Chronologically it was the last verse to be revealed.

Beginning with an appeal to fulfil, as sacred, all obligations, human and divine, it points to certain regulations about food, as conducive to a sober and social life, without superstition and without bias or hatred (v. 1-6, and C. 69).

Cleanliness of body, and justice and uprightness of dealing are nearest to Piety (v. 7-12, and C. 70).

If the Jews and the Christians turned back from the Truth and violated their Covenants, they have had their warning (v. 13-29, and C. 71).

The murder of Abel by Cain is the type of the treatment which the just man suffers from the envious. There is punishment from God. The just man must not grieve (v. 30-46, and C. 72).

Muslims must do impartial justice, but must protect their own Brotherhood and their Faith from insult and scorn: they must appreciate piety, humility, and other good points among the Christians (v. 47-89, and C. 73).

They must enjoy with gratitude all that is good and lawful, but guard themselves against excess. Swearing, intoxication, gambling, violation of the Sanctuary, superstitions of all kinds, and false evidence are condemned (v. 90-111, and C. 74).

The miracles of Jesus, and how they were misused by those who bore his name (v. 112-123, and C. 75).

C. 69.—All obligations are sacred, human

(v. 1-6.) Or divine. In the spiritual world

We owe duties to God, which must

Be fulfilled. But whilst we are

In this world of sense, those duties

Are by no means isolated

From what we owe to ourselves

And our fellows in the world

Of men. We must respect

The laws and customs of the Sacred

Mosque and the Sacred Sanctuary.

In food our laws are simple:

All things good and pure are lawful.

We refuse not social intercourse

With men and women,—

People of the Book.

Sūra V.

Māida, or The Table-Spread.*In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

1. **Oh ye who believe!**
Fulfil (all) obligations. ⁶⁸²
2. **Lawful unto you (for food)**
Are all four-footed animals,
With the exceptions named: ⁶⁸³
But animals of the chase
Are forbidden while ye
Are in the Sacred Precincts
Or in pilgrim garb: ⁶⁸⁴
For God doth command
According to His Will and Plan. ⁶⁸⁵
- 3: **Oh ye who believe!**
Violate not the sanctity



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ

أُحِلَّتْ لَكُم بَهِيمَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ
إِلَّا مَا يَمِثُّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُحِلِّي الصَّيْدِ
وَأَنْتُمْ حُرَّةٌ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْكُرُ مَا يُرِيدُ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَجْنُوْا

682. This line has been justly admired for its terseness and comprehensiveness. Obligations: 'uqud': the Arabic word implies so many things that a whole chapter of Commentary can be written on it. First, there are the divine obligations that arise from our spiritual nature and our relation to God. He created us and implanted in us the faculty of knowledge and foresight; besides the intuition and reason which He gave us, He made Nature responsive to our needs, and His Signs in Nature are so many lessons to us in our own inner life; He further sent Messengers and Teachers, for the guidance of our conduct in individual, social, and public life. All these gifts create corresponding obligations which we must fulfil. But in our own human and material life we undertake mutual obligations, express and implied. We make a promise; we enter into a commercial or social contract; we enter into a contract of marriage: we must faithfully fulfil all obligations in all these relationships. Our group or our State enters into a treaty: every individual in that group or State is bound to see that as far as lies in his power, such obligations are faithfully discharged. There are tacit obligations: living in civil society, we must respect its tacit conventions unless they are morally wrong, and in that case we must get out of such society. There are tacit obligations in the characters of host and guest, wayfarer or companion, employer or employed, etc., etc., which every man of Faith must discharge conscientiously. The man who deserts those who need him and goes to pray in a desert is a coward who disregards his obligations. All these obligations are inter-connected. Truth and fidelity are parts of religion in all relations of life.

This verse is numbered separately from the succeeding verses by Hāfiẓ 'Uthmān and the Fath-ur-Rahmān. As it forms a paragraph or chapter by itself, I have followed that numbering throughout this Sūra, thus reluctantly diverging from the numbering in the edition of the *Anjuman-i-Himāyat-i-Islām* throughout this chapter.

683. See v. 4 below.

684. Cf. v. 95 96. Hunting and the use of game are forbidden "while ye are *ḥurumun*," i.e., while ye are (1) in the Sacred Precincts, or (2) in the special pilgrim garb (*iḥrām*), as to which see n. 212, ii. 196. In most cases the two amount to the same thing. The Sacred Precincts are sanctuary both for man and beast.

685. God's commands are not arbitrary. His Will is the perfect Archetype or Plan of the world. Everything He wills has regard to His Plan, in which are reflected His perfect wisdom and goodness.

Of the Symbols of God,⁶⁸⁶
 Nor of the Sacred Month,⁶⁸⁷
 Nor of the animals brought
 For sacrifice, nor the garlands
 That mark out such animals,
 Nor the people resorting
 To the Sacred House,⁶⁸⁸
 Seeking of the bounty
 And good pleasure
 Of their Lord.
 But when ye are clear
 Of the Sacred Precincts⁶⁸⁹
 And of pilgrim garb,
 Ye may hunt,
 And let not the hatred
 Of some people
 In (once) shutting you out
 Of the Sacred Mosque
 Lead you to transgression
 (And hostility on your part).⁶⁹⁰
 Help ye one another
 In righteousness and piety,
 But help ye not one another
 In sin and enmity :
 Fear God: for God
 Is strict in punishment.

4. Forbidden to you (for food)
 Are: carrion, blood,

شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ
 وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْفَلَاحِ
 وَلَا آمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ
 يَنْتَعُونَ فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا
 وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا
 وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا نَقُومَ
 أَنْ صَدَّقْتُمْ
 عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
 أَنْ تَعْتَدُوا
 وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى
 وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ
 وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ
 ٢- حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَتِيمَةُ وَالذَّامِرُ

686. Cf. ii. 158, where *Ḥafā* and *Marwa* are called "Symbols (*shai'ir*) of God". Here the Symbols are everything connected with the Pilgrimage, viz. (1) the places (like *Ḥafā* and *Marwa*, or the *Ka'ba* or *'Arafāt*, etc.); (2) the rites and ceremonies prescribed; (3) prohibitions (such as that of hunting, etc.); (4) the times and seasons prescribed. There is spiritual and moral symbolism in all these. See notes on ii. 158, ii. 194-200.

687. The month of pilgrimage, or else, collectively, the four sacred months (ix. 36, viz., *Rajab* (7th), *Zul-qa'd* (11th), *Zul-hajj* (12th, the month of Pilgrimage), and *Muharram* (the first of the year). In all these months War was prohibited. Excepting *Rajab* the other three months are consecutive.

688. The immunity from attack or interference extended to the animals brought as offerings for sacrifice and the garlands or fillets or distinguishing marks which gave them immunity. They were treated as sacred symbols. And of course every protection or immunity was enjoyed by the Pilgrims.

689. This is the state opposite to that described in n. 684, i.e., when ye have left the Sacred Precincts, and have doffed the special pilgrim garb, showing your return to ordinary life.

690. See n. 205 to ii. 191. In the sixth year of the *Hijra* the Pagans, by way of hatred and persecution of the Muslims, had prevented them from access to the Sacred Mosque. When the Muslims were re-established in Mecca, some of them wanted to retaliate and exclude the Pagans or in some way to interfere with them in the Pilgrimage. This is condemned. Passing from the immediate event to the general principle, we must not retaliate or return evil for evil. The hatred of the wicked does not justify hostility on our part. We have to help each other in righteousness and piety, not in perpetuating feuds of hatred and enmity. We may have to fight and put down evil, but never in a spirit of malice or hatred, but always in a spirit of justice and righteousness.

The flesh of swine, and that
On which hath been invoked
The name of other than God;⁶⁹¹
That which hath been
Killed by strangling,
Or by a violent blow,
Or by a headlong fall,
Or by being gored to death;
That which hath been (partly)
Eaten by a wild animal;
Unless ye are able
To slaughter it (in due form);⁶⁹²
That which is sacrificed⁶⁹³
On stone (altars);
(Forbidden) also is the division⁶⁹⁴
(Of meat) by raffling
With arrows: that is impiety.

On this day have those who
Reject Faith given up
All hope of your religion:⁶⁹⁵
Yet fear them not
But fear Me.
This day have I
Perfected your religion⁶⁹⁶
For you, completed
My favour upon you,
And have chosen for you
Islam as your religion.

But if any is forced
By hunger, with no inclination
To transgression, God is
Indeed Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

وَلَحْمُ الْخَنَازِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ بِهِ
وَالْمُتَخَفِقَةُ
وَالْمَوْقُودَةُ
وَالْمَتَكْرِبَةُ
وَالطَّيْبَةُ
وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ
وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ
وَأَنْ تَسْتَفِيتُمْ بِلِأَالِكُمْ
ذِكْرُكُمْ فَسُوقُوا
الْيَوْمَ بَيْتُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ
فَلَا تَحْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي
الْيَوْمَ اكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ
وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي
وَارْتَضَيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا
فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ
إِلَيْهَا
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

691. Cf. ii. 173 and nn. 173 and 174. The prohibition of carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which other names than that of God has been invoked, has been there explained.

692. If an animal dies by strangling, or by a violent blow, or a headlong fall, or by being gored to death, or by being attacked by a wild animal, the presumption is that it becomes carrion, as the life blood is congealed before being taken out of the body. But the presumption can be rebutted. If the life-blood still flows and the solemn mode of slaughter (*zabâ*) in the name of God as a sacrifice is carried out, it becomes lawful as food.

693. This was also an idolatrous rite, different from that in which a sacrifice was devoted to a particular idol or a false god.

694. Gambling of all kinds is forbidden: ii. 291. A sort of lottery or raffle practised by Pagan Arabs has been described in n. 241. Division of meat in this way is here forbidden, as it is a form of gambling.

695. So long as Islam was not organised, with its own community and its own laws, the Unbelievers had hoped to wean the Believers from the new Teaching. Now that hope was gone, with the complete organisation of Islam.

696. The last verse revealed chronologically, marking the approaching end of Muḥammad's ministry in his earthly life.

5. They ask thee what is
Lawful to them (as food).⁶⁹⁷
Say: Lawful unto you
Are all things good and pure :
And what ye have taught
Your trained hunting animals
(To catch) in the manner
Directed to you by God :
Eat what they catch for you,⁶⁹⁸
But pronounce the name
Of God over it : and fear
God ; for God is swift
In taking account.

6. This day are all things
Good and pure made lawful
Unto you. The food
Of the People of the Book⁶⁹⁹
Is lawful unto you
And yours is lawful
Unto them.
(Lawful unto you in marriage)
Are (not only) chaste women
Who are believers, but
Chaste women among
The People of the Book,⁷⁰⁰

هـ- يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا أُحِلَّ لَهُمْ
قُلْ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ
وَمَا عَلَّمْتُمْ مِنَ الْجَوَارِحِ مُكَلِّبِينَ
تَعْلَمُونَ لَهُنَّ وَمَا عَلَّمَكُمُ اللَّهُ
فَكُلُوا مِمَّا أَمْسَكْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ○

ب- الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ
وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَلَلٌ
لَكُمْ
وَطَعَامُكُمْ حَلَلٌ لَهُمْ
وَالْخُصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
وَالْخُصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ

697. The previous verse was negative; it defined what was not lawful for food, *viz.*, things gross, or disgusting, or dedicated to superstition. This verse is positive: it defines what is lawful, *viz.*, all things that are good and pure.

698. In the matter of the killing for meat, the general rule is that the name of the true God should be pronounced as a rite in order to call our attention to the fact that we do not take life thoughtlessly but solemnly for food, with the permission of God, to whom we render the life back. The question of hunting is then raised. How can this solemn rite be performed when we send forth trained hawks, trained hounds, or trained cheetahs or other animals trained for the chase? They must necessarily kill at some distance from their masters. Their game is legalised on these conditions: (1) that they are trained to kill, not merely for their own appetite, or out of mere wantonness, but for their master's food; the training implies that something of the solemnity which God has taught us in this matter goes into their action; and (2) we are to pronounce the name of God over the quarry; this is interpreted to mean that the *kalima* should be pronounced when the hawk or dog, etc., is released to the quarry.

699. The question is for food generally, such as is ordinarily "good and pure": in the matter of meat it should be killed with some sort of solemnity analogous to that of the *kalima*. The rules of Islam in this respect being analogous to those of the People of the Book, there is no objection to mutual recognition, as opposed to meat killed by Pagans with superstitious rites. In this respect the Christian rule is the same: "That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication," (Acts, xv. 29.) Notice the bracketing of fornication with things unlawful to eat.

700. Islam is not exclusive. Social intercourse, including inter-marriage, is permitted with the People of the Book. A Muslim man may marry a woman from their ranks on the same terms as he would marry a Muslim woman, *i. e.*, he must give her an economic and moral status, and must not be actuated merely by motives of lust or physical desire. A Muslim woman may not marry a non-Muslim man, because her Muslim status would be affected: the wife ordinarily takes the nationality and status given by her husband's law. A non-Muslim woman marrying a Muslim husband would be expected eventually to accept Islam. Any man or woman, of any race or faith, may, on accepting Islam, freely marry any Muslim woman or man, provided it be from motives of purity and chastity and not of lewdness.

Revealed before your time,—
When ye give them
Their due dowers, and desire
Chastity, not lewdness,
Nor secret intrigues.
If any one rejects faith,⁷⁰¹
Fruitless will be his work,
And in the Hereafter
He will be in the ranks
Of those who have lost
(All spiritual good).

مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ
أُجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ
غَيْرِ مُسْتَفْهِينَ وَلَا مُتَجِدِّينَ أَخْدَانٍ
وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ
وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

C. 70.—God wishes us to be clean and pure,
(v. 7-12.) At prayer and at other times.
But justice and right conduct,
Even in the face of spite and hatred,
Are nearest to Piety and the love
Of God: in Him we put our trust.

SECTION 2.

7. **Ph** ye who believe!
When ye prepare
For prayer, wash⁷⁰²
Your faces, and your hands
(And arms) to the elbows;
Rub your heads (with water);
And (wash) your feet
To the ankles.
If ye are in a state
Of ceremonial impurity,⁷⁰³
Bathe your whole body.
But if ye are ill,
Or on a journey,
Or one of you cometh
From offices of nature,
Or ye have been
In contact with women,
And ye find no water,
Then take for yourselves
Clean sand or earth,⁷⁰⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ
فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ
إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ
وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ
وَأِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا
وَأِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ
أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ
أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ
أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً
فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا

701. As always, food, cleanliness, social intercourse, marriage and other interests in life, are linked with our duty to God and faith in Him. Duty and faith are for our own benefit, here and in the Hereafter.

702. These are the essentials of Wudhū, or ablutions preparatory to prayers, viz. (1) to bathe the whole face in water, and (2) both hands and arms to the elbows, with (3) a little rubbing of the head with water (as the head is usually protected and comparatively clean), and (4) the bathing of the feet to the ankles. In addition, following the practice of the Apostle, it is usual first to wash the mouth, the throat, and the nose, before proceeding with the face, etc.

703. C. iv. 43 and n. 563. Ceremonial impurity arises from sex pollution.

704. This is *Tayammum*, or washing with clean sand or earth where water is not available. I take it that this substitute is permissible both for Wudhū and for a full bath, in the circumstances mentioned.

And rub therewith
Your faces and hands.
God doth not wish
To place you in a difficulty,
But to make you clean,
And to complete
His favour to you,
That ye may be grateful.

8. And call in remembrance
The favour of God
Unto you, and the Covenant ⁷⁰⁵
Which He ratified
With you, when ye said:
"We hear and we obey":
And fear God, for God
Knoweth well
The secrets of your hearts.

9. Oh ye who believe!
Stand out firmly
For God, as witnesses ⁷⁰⁶
To fair dealing, and let not
The hatred of others
To you make you swerve ⁷⁰⁷
To wrong and depart from
Justice. Be just: that is
Next to Piety: and fear God.
For God is well acquainted
With all that ye do.

10. To those who believe
And do deeds of righteousness
Hath God promised forgiveness
And a great reward.

فَاَمْسَحُوا بِوُجُوْهِكُمْ وَاَيْدِيكُمْ مِّنْهُ
مَا يُرِيدُ اللّٰهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ
وَلٰكِنْ لِّيُطَهِّرَكُمْ
وَلِيُنِزِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ رِزْقًا كَثِيْرًا ۝

٨- وَاذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَمِيْثَاقَهُ الَّذِي وَاَقَامْتُمْ بِهِ
اِذْ قُلْتُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا
وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۝

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ بِذٰاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ۝

٩- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُوْنُوْا قَوٰمِيْنَ
لِلّٰهِ شُهَدَآءَ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلٰى اَلَّا
تَعْدِلُوْا اِعْدِلُوْا هُوَ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى
وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۝

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝

١٠- وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّاَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ ۝

705. There is a particular and a general meaning. The particular meaning refers to the solemn Pledge and Covenant taken by two groups of people at 'Aqaba, a valley near Mina, the first about fourteen months before the Hijra, and the second a little later. These were Pledges of fealty to the Apostle of God, comparable to the Covenant under Mount Sinai taken in the time of Moses. (See Q. ii. 63 and n. 78.) The general meaning has been explained in n. 682 to v. 1: man is under a spiritual obligation under an implied Covenant with God: God has given man reason, judgment, the higher faculties of the soul, and even the position of God's viceroy on earth (ii. 30), and man is bound to serve God faithfully and obey His Will. That obedience begins with cleanliness in bodily functions, food, etc. It goes on to cleanliness of mind and thought, and culminates in purity of motives in the inmost recesses of his heart and soul.

706. Cf. iv. 135.

707. To do justice and act righteously in a favourable or neutral atmosphere is meritorious enough, but the real test comes when you have to do justice to people who hate you or to whom you have an aversion. But no less is required of you by the higher moral law.

11. Those who reject faith
And deny Our Signs
Will be Companions
Of Hell-fire.

۱۱- وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَهَنَّمَ ۝

12. Oh ye who believe !
Call in remembrance
The favour of God
Unto you when
Certain men formed the design
To stretch out
Their hands against you,
But God held back
Their hands from you: 708
So fear God. And on God
Let Believers put
(All) their trust.

۱۲- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا
فَضْلَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
إِذْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ أَنْ يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ
أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۝

- C. 71.—If the men who received revelations
(v. 13-29.) Before were false to their trust,
If they broke their agreements
And twisted God's Message from its aim,
If they rebelled against Truth and followed
Their fancies, God's grace was withdrawn
From them and they wandered in the wilderness.

SECTION 3.

13. God did aforetime
Take a Covenant from
The Children of Israel,⁷⁰⁹
And We appointed twelve
Captains among them.
And God said : " I am
With you: if ye (but)
Establish regular Prayers,

۱۳- وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ
وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا
وَقَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ
لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ

708. In the lifetime of the Apostle it happened again and again that the enemies of Islam stretched out their hands against the Apostle, his people, and his teaching. The odds were, from a worldly point of view, in their favour, but their hands were rendered inert and powerless because they were fighting against the truth of God. So does it happen always, now as it did then. True faith must take heart, and at the same time humbly recognize God's favour and mercy, and be grateful.

709. Cf. ii. 63 and n. 78. "Moses.....called for the elders of the people,.....and all the people answered together and said, 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.'" (Exod. xix. 7-8.) This was under the towering height of Mount Sinai.

The captains or elders or leaders of the people were selected, one from each of the twelve tribes (see ii. 60 and n. 73). For census purposes the names of the elders of the tribes are given in Num. i. 4-16: they are called "every one the head of the house of his fathers". Later, twelve other "heads of the Children of Israel" were selected to spy out the land of Canaan: their names are mentioned in Num. xiii. 1-16. See also, below, v. 22-29 and notes.

Practise regular Charity,
Believe in My apostles,
Honour and assist them,
And loan to God
A beautiful loan,⁷¹⁰
Verily I will wipe out
From you your iniquities,
And admit you to Gardens
With rivers flowing beneath ;
But if any of you, after this,
Resisteth faith, he hath truly
Wandered from the path
Of rectitude."⁷¹¹

14. But because of their breach
Of their Covenant, We
Cursed them,⁷¹² and made
Their hearts grow hard :
They change the words
From their (right) places
And forget a good part
Of the Message that was
Sent them, nor wilt thou
Cease to find them—
Barring a few—ever
Bent on (new) deceits :⁷¹³
But forgive them, and overlook⁷¹⁴
(Their misdeeds) : for God
Loveth those who are kind.

15. From those, too, who call
Themselves Christians,

وَأَيَّدْتُمُ الْمَرْكُوزَةَ وَأَمْتُمْ بِرُسُلِي
وَعَزَّزْتُمْهُمْ وَأَقْرَضْتُمُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا
لَّا أَكْفُرُ بِكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ
وَلَا أَدْخِلُكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
فَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ
فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ○

١٤- فِيمَا نَعُصِيهِمْ وَبِئْسَ أَقْلُهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ
وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً
يُحْدِثُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ
وَكُتُوا حَظًّا وَمَا ذَكَّرُوا بِهِ
وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَافِيَةٍ مِنْهُمْ
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ
فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ○

١٥- وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصَارَى

710. Cf. ii. 245, n. 276. The phrase means "spending in the cause of God." God in His infinite grace looks upon this as a loan, for which He gives a recompense manifold.

711. *The path of rectitude* : or the even way : see ii. 108, n. 109.

712. *Cursed them* : that means that because of the breach of their Covenant, God withdrew His overflowing Grace from them. The withdrawal of grace made their hearts grow hard in two ways : (1) they were no longer protected from the assaults of evil, and (2) they became impervious even to the message of forgiveness and mercy which is open to all God's creatures.

713. Israel, when it lost God's grace as above, began to sin against truth and religion in three ways : (1) they began to misuse Scripture itself, by either taking words out of their right meaning, or applying them to things for which they were never meant ; (2) in doing so, they conveniently forgot a part of the Message and purpose of God ; and (3) they invented new deceits and go on doing it to support the old ones.

714. Cf. ii. 109 and n. 110, where I have explained the different shades of meaning in the words for "forgiveness."

We did take a Covenant,⁷¹⁵
But they forgot a good part
Of the Message that was
Sent them : so We estranged
Them, with enmity and hatred
Between the one and the other,
To the Day of Judgment.
And soon will He show
Them what it is
They have done.

16. Oh People of the Book!
There hath come to you
Our Apostle, revealing
To you much that ye
Used to hide in the Book,
And forgiving much
(That ye did against him):

17. There hath come to you
From God a (new) light
And a perspicuous Book,—⁷¹⁶

18. Wherewith God guideth all
Who seek His good pleasure
To ways of peace and safety,
And leadeth them out
Of darkness, by His Will,
Unto the light,—guideth them
To the Path that is Straight.

19. In blasphemy indeed
Are those that say
That God is Christ
The son of Mary.
Say : "Who then
Hath the least power

أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَهُمْ
فَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ
فَاغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ
وَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيهِمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ○

١٦- يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا
يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ
الْكِتَابِ
وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ○

١٧- قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ
وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ ○

١٨- يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَرَادَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ
السَّلَامِ
وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ
وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ○

١٩- لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ
قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ

715. The Christian Covenant may be taken to be the charge which Jesus gave to his disciples, and which the disciples accepted, to welcome Ahmad (Q. lxi. 6). Glimpses of this are to be found in the Gospel of St. John even as it exists now (John xv. 26, xvi. 7). It is those who call themselves "Christians" who reject this. True Christians have accepted it. The enmity between those who call themselves Christians and the Jews will continue till the Last Day.

716. *Mubīn*: I wish I could translate by a simpler word than "perspicuous". But "plain" may mean unadorned, the opposite of beautiful, and this Book is among the most beautiful that it is the privilege of mankind to read. "Clear" would be right as far as it means "unambiguous, self-evident, not involved in mysteries of origin, history, or meaning, one which every one can understand and as to the essentials necessary for him, without the intervention of priests or privileged persons". *Mubīn* has all these meanings, but it suggests, besides, some quality of a shining light, by which we are able to make things clear, to distinguish the true from the false. This I think is suggested better by "perspicuous" than by the word "clear." Besides it is hardly good idiom to speak of "a clear Book".

Against God, if His Will
Were to destroy Christ
The son of Mary, his mother,
And all—every one
That is on the earth?
For to God belongeth
The dominion of the heavens
And the earth, and all
That is between. He createth⁷¹⁷
What He pleaseth. For God
Hath power over all things."

20. Both the Jews and the Christians

Say: "We are sons
Of God, and His beloved."⁷¹⁸
Say: "Why then doth He
Punish you for your sins?
Nay, ye are but men,—
Of the men He hath created:
He forgiveth whom He pleaseth,
And He punisheth whom He
pleaseth:
And to God belongeth⁷¹⁹
The dominion of the heavens
And the earth, and all
That is between:
And unto Him
Is the final goal (of all)."

21. Oh People of the Book!
Now hath come unto you
Our Apostle, after the break⁷²⁰
In (the series of) our apostles,

مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ النَّبِيَّ
ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَآمَتَهُ
وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا
وَاللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ○

٢٠- وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى
نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ
قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ
بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ
يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ
وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ ○

٢١- يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا
يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَى فَتْرَةٍ مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ

717. The most honoured of the apostles of God are but men. All power belongs to God, and not to any man. God's creation may take many forms, but because in any particular form it is different from what we see daily around us, it does not cease to be Creation, or to be subject to the power of God. No creature can be God.

718. *Sons of God*: Cf. Joh. xxxviii. 7: "When the morning stars shone together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." In the 29th Psalm, 1st verse, the authorised Translation "O ye mighty" should apparently be "O ye sons of Elim", El being a name of God. Cf. also Genesis, vi. 2: "The sons of God saw the daughters of men."

Beloved: Cf. Psalms, cxxvii. 2: "He giveth his beloved sleep."

If used figuratively, these and like words refer to the love of God. Unfortunately, "son" used in a physical sense, or "beloved" in an exclusive sense as if God loved only the Jews, make a mockery of religion.

719. This refrain in the last verse negatives the idea of sonship, and in this verse negatives the idea of an exclusive "Beloved". In both cases it means that God is independent of physical relationships or exclusive partiality.

720. The six hundred years (in round figures) between Christ and Muḥammad were truly the dark ages of the world. Religion was corrupted; the standard of morals fell low; many false systems and heresies arose; and there was a break in the succession of apostles until the advent of Muḥammad.

Lest ye should say :
 " There came unto us
 No bringer of glad tidings
 And no warner (from evil) " :
 But now hath come
 Unto you a bringer
 Of glad tidings
 And a warner (from evil).
 And God hath power
 Over all things.

SECTION 4.

22. Remember Moses said
 To his people: "Oh my People!
 Call in remembrance the favour
 Of God unto you, when He
 Produced prophets among you,⁷²¹
 Made you kings,⁷²² and gave
 You what He had not given
 To any other among the peoples.⁷²³

23. "Oh my people! enter⁷²⁴
 The holy land which
 God hath assigned unto you,
 And turn not back
 Ignominiously, for then
 Will ye be overthrown,
 To your own ruin."

أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا مِنْ بَشِيرٍ
 وَلَا نَذِيرٍ
 فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ
 وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ٥

٢٢- وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ
 يَقُومُوا إِذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
 إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا
 وَأَنْتُمْ كَانُمْ يُؤْتُونَ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ٥

٢٣- يَقُومُوا ادْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ
 الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
 وَلَا تَرْجِعُوا عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ
 فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَائِبِينَ ٥

721. There was a long line of patriarchs and prophets before Moses, e.g., Abraham, Isaac, Isma'el, Jacob, etc.

722. From the slavery of Egypt the Children of Israel were made free and independent, and thus each man became as it were a king, if only he had obeyed God and followed the lead of Moses.

723. Cf. Exod. xix. 5: "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." Israel was chosen to be the vehicle of God's message, the highest honour which any nation can receive.

724. We now come to the events detailed in the 13th and 14th chapters of the Book of Numbers in the Old Testament. Read these as a Commentary, and examine a good map of the Sinai Peninsula, showing its connections with Egypt on the west, North-West Arabia on the east, and Palestine on the north-east. We may suppose that Israel crossed from Egypt into the Peninsula somewhere near the northern extremity of the Gulf of Suez. Moses organised and numbered the people, and instituted the Priesthood. They went south about 200 miles to Mount Sinai where the Law was received. Then, perhaps a hundred and fifty miles north, was the desert of Paran, close to the southern borders of Canaan. From the camp there twelve men were sent to spy out the land, and they penetrated as far as Hebron, say about 150 miles north of their camp, about 20 miles south of the future Jerusalem. They saw a rich country, and brought from it pomegranates and figs and a bunch of grapes so heavy that it had to be carried by two men on a staff. They came back and reported that the land was rich, but the men there were too strong for them. The people of Israel had no courage and no faith, and Moses remonstrated with them.

24. They said: "Oh Moses !
In this land are a people
Of exceeding strength :⁷²⁵
Never shall we enter it
Until they leave it :
If (once) they leave,
Then shall we enter."
25. (But) among (their) God-fearing
men
Were two on whom
God had bestowed His grace :⁷²⁶
They said : "Assault them
At the (proper) Gate :
When once ye are in,
Victory will be yours ;
26. But on God put your trust
If ye have faith."
27. They said: "Oh Moses !
While they remain there,
Never shall we be able
To enter, to the end of time.
Go thou, and thy Lord,
And fight ye two,
While we sit here⁷²⁷
(And watch)."
28. He said: "Oh my Lord !
I have power only
- ٢٣- قَالُوا يٰمُوسَى اِنَّ فِيْهَا قَوْمًا جَبّارِيْنَ
وَ اِنَّا لَنْ نَدْخُلَهَا
حَتّٰى يَخْرُجُوْا مِنْهَا
فَاِنْ يَخْرُجُوْا مِنْهَا فَاِنَّا دَاخِلُوْنَ
٢٤- قَالِ رَجُلَيْنِ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَخَافُوْنَ
اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ
عَلَيْهِمَا اَدْخُلُوْا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ
فَاِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوْهُ فَالْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝
٢٥- وَ عَلٰى اللّٰهِ تَوَكَّلُوْا اِنَّ لَكُمْ مَعَهُ مَوْجِبِيْنَ
٢٦- قَالُوا يٰمُوسَى اِنَّا لَنْ نَدْخُلَهَا اَبَدًا
مَّا دَامُوْا فِيْهَا
فَاَذْهَبْ اَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَعَابِلًا
اِنَّا هُنَا قَاعِدُوْنَ ۝
٢٧- قَالِ رَبِّ اِنِّىْ لَا اَمْلِكُ

725. The people were not willing to follow the lead of Moses, and were not willing to fight for their "inheritance". In effect they said: "Turn out the enemy first, and then we shall enter into possession." In God's Law we must work and strive for what we wish to enjoy

726. Among those who returned after spying out the land were two men who had faith and courage. They were Joshua and Caleb. Joshua afterwards succeeded Moses in the leadership after 40 years. These two men pleaded for an immediate entry through the proper Gate, which I understand to mean, "after taking all due precautions and making all due preparations". Cf. ii. 189 and n. 203. But of course, they said, they must put their trust in God for victory.

727. The advice of Joshua and Caleb, and the proposals of Moses under divine instructions were unpalatable to the crowd, whose prejudices were further inflamed by the other ten men who had gone with Joshua and Caleb. They made an "evil report," and were frightened by the great stature of the Canaanites. The crowd was in open rebellion, were prepared to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb, and return to Egypt. Their reply to Moses was full of irony, insolence, blasphemy, and cowardice. In effect they said: "You talk of your God and all that: go with your God and fight there if you like: we shall sit here and watch."

Over myself and my brother :⁷²⁸
So separate us from this
Rebellious people !”

29. God said: “ Therefore
Will the land be out
Of their reach for forty years :⁷²⁹
In distraction will they
Wander through the land :
But sorrow thou not
Over these rebellious people.

إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَأَخِي
فَأَفْرِقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ
٣٠- قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُخِزَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ
سَنَةً يَتِيهِنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ٥

C. 72.—The jealousy of Cain against Abel,
(v. 30-46.) Which led to the murder
Of innocent Abel, is the type
Of the jealousy between the People
Of the Book and their younger brethren
In Islam. Jealousy leads to envy
And murder. Such crimes against
Individuals are often crimes
Against whole peoples. There are
Men who are ready to catch up
Every lie told against a just man.
The just man should not grieve,
For that is their way.

SECTION 5.

30. Recite to them the truth⁷³⁰
Of the story of the two sons⁷³¹

٣٠- وَاقْرَأْ عَلَيْهِمُ نَبَأَ ابْنَيْ

728. “Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation.” (Num. xiv. 5). According to the words in the Old Testament story, God said: “I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them.” (Num. xiv. 12). Moses prayed and interceded. But as we are told here, (a spiritual touch not found in the Jewish story), Moses was careful to separate himself and his brother from the rebellion.

729. The punishment of the rebellion of these stiff-necked people, rebellion that was repeated “these ten times” (Num. xiv. 22) and more, was that they were left to wander distractedly hither and thither through the wilderness for forty years. That generation was not to see the Holy Land. All those that were twenty years old and upwards were to die in the wilderness: “your carcases shall fall in this wilderness.” (Num. xiv. 29). Only those who were then children would reach the promised land. And so it happened. From the desert of Paran they wandered south, north, and east, for forty years. From the head of what is now the Gulf of ‘Aqaba, they travelled north, keeping to the east side of the depression of which the Dead Sea and the river Jordan are portions. Forty years afterwards they crossed the Jordan opposite what is now Jericho, but by that time Moses, Aaron, and the whole of the elder generation had died.

730. Literally, “recite to them in truth the story”, etc. The point is that the story in Gen. iv. 1-15 is a bare narrative, not including the lessons now to be enforced. The Apostle is told now to supply the truth of the matter, the details that will enforce the lessons.

731. The two sons of Adam were Hâbil (in the English Bible, Abel) and Qâbil (in English, Cain). Cain was the elder, and Abel the younger,—the righteous and innocent one. Presuming on the right of the elder, Cain was puffed up with arrogance and jealousy, which led him to commit the crime of murder. Among the Christians, Cain was the type of the Jew as against Abel the Christian. The Jew tried to kill Jesus and exterminate the Christian. In the same way, as against Muḥammad, the younger brother of the Semitic family, Cain was the type of the Old Testament and New Testament people, who tried to resist and kill Muḥammad and put down his people,

Of Adam. Behold! they each
Presented a sacrifice (to God):
It was accepted from one,
But not from the other.
Said the latter: "Be sure
I shall slay thee." "Surely,"
Said the former, "God
Doth accept of the sacrifice
Of those who are righteous.

31. "If thou dost stretch thy hand
Against me, to slay me,
It is not for me to stretch
My hand against thee
To slay thee: for I do fear
God, the Cherisher of the Worlds.

32. "For me, I intend to let
Thee draw on thyself
My sin as well as thine,⁷³²
For thou wilt be among
The Companions of the Fire,
And that is the reward
Of those who do wrong."⁷³³

33. The (selfish) soul of the other
Led him to the murder
Of his brother: he murdered
Him, and became (himself)
One of the lost ones.⁷³⁴

34. Then God sent a raven,
Who scratched the ground,

قَالَ لَهُمُ الْبَاقِي إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا
فَتُخْبِلُ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا
وَلَمْ يُتَّخَذْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ
قَالَ لَا تَقْتُلَاكَ

قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَّخِذُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ○

٣١- لَئِنْ بَسَطْتَ إِلَى يَدَاكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي
مَا أَنَا بِبَاسٍ بِيَدَيْكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
إِلَى أَخَاكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ○

٣٢- إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ تَبْذُرَ بِرَأْسِي وَإِنْ شِئْتَ
فَتَكُونُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ
وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

٣٣- قَطَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ
فَقَتَلَهُ
فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ○

٣٤- فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ

732. *My sin as well as thine.* There are two possible interpretations. (1) The obvious one is that the unjust murderer not only carried on himself the burden of his own sin, but also the burden of his victim's sins. The victim, in suffering a wrong or injustice, is forgiven his own sins, and the wrong-doer, having been warned, aggravates his own sin. (2) "My sin" has also been interpreted as "the sin against me, in that thou slayest me": in that case "thy sin" may mean either "thy crime in committing a murder," or "thy sin against thyself, for the crime causes real loss to thyself in the Hereafter." See the last clause of the next verse.

733. Abel's speech is full of meaning. He is innocent and God-fearing. To the threat of death held out by the other, he returns a calm reply, aimed at reforming the other. "Surely," he pleads, "if your sacrifice was not accepted, there was something wrong in you, for God is just and accepts the sacrifice of the righteous. If this does not deter you, I am not going to retaliate, though there is as much power in me against you as you have against me. I fear my Maker, for I know He cherishes all His Creation. Let me warn you that you are doing wrong. I do not intend even to resist, but do you know what the consequences will be to you? You will be in spiritual torment."

734. The innocent unselfish pleading of the younger brother had no effect, for the soul of the other was full of pride, selfishness, and jealousy. He committed the murder, but in doing so, ruined his own self.

To show him how to hide
The shame of his brother.⁷³⁵
"Woe is me!" said he;
"Was I not even able
To be as this raven,
And to hide the shame
Of my brother?" Then he became
Full of regrets—⁷³⁶

35. On that account: We ordained
For the Children of Israel
That if any one slew
A person—unless it be
For murder or for spreading
Mischief in the land—
It would be as if
He slew the whole people:⁷³⁷
And if any one saved a life,
It would be as if he saved
The life of the whole people.
Then although there came
To them Our Apostles
With Clear Signs, yet,
Even after that, many
Of them continued to commit
Excesses in the land.

36. ~~The~~ The punishment of those
Who wage war against God
And His Apostle, and strive
With might and main
For mischief through the land⁷³⁸
Is: execution, or crucifixion,

لِيُرِيَهُ كَيْفَ يُؤَارَى سَوْءَةَ أَخِيهِ
قَالَ يُؤْيِلُنِي أَجْمَزْتُ أَنْ أَكُونُ مِثْلَ
هَذَا الْعَرَابِ فَأُؤَارَى سَوْءَةَ أَخِي
فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْغَدَّاءِ مَيِّتٌ ۝

٣٥- مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ ۝
كُتِبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ
أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا
بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَمَا كُنَّا قَتَلِ النَّاسِ جَمِيعًا
وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا
وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
ثُمَّ إِنْ كَذَّبُوهَا ۝
بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَنُسَمِّيَنَّهُنَّ
٣٦- إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا
أَن يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا

735. *Saw-at* may mean corpse, with a suggestion of nakedness and shame in two senses: (1) the sense of being exposed without burial, and (2) the sense of being insulted by being violently deprived, by the unwarranted murder, of the soul which inhabited it,—the soul, too, of a brother.

736. The thought at last came home to the murderer. It was dreadful indeed to slay any one—the more so as he was a brother, and an innocent righteous brother! But worse still, the murderer had not even the decency to bury the corpse, and of this simple duty he was reminded by a raven—a black bird usually held in contempt! His regret was on that account. That was not true repentance.

737. The story of Cain is referred to in a few graphic details in order to tell the story of Israel. Israel rebelled against God, slew and insulted righteous men, who did them no harm but on the contrary came in all humility. When God withdrew His favour from Israel because of its sins and bestowed it on a brother nation, the jealousy of Israel plunged it deeper into sin. To kill or seek to kill an individual because he represents an ideal is to kill all who uphold the ideal. On the other hand, to save an individual life in the same circumstances is to save a whole community. What could be stronger condemnation of individual assassination and revenge?

738. For the double crime of treason against the State, combined with treason against God, as shown by overt crimes, four alternative punishments are mentioned, any one of which is to be applied according to circumstances: *viz.*, execution (cutting off of the head), crucifixion, maiming, or exile. These were features of the Criminal Law then and for centuries afterwards, except that tortures such as "hanging, drawing, and quartering" in English Law, and piercing of eyes and leaving the unfortunate victim exposed to a tropical sun, which was practised in Arabia, and all such tortures were abolished. In any case sincere repentance before it was too late was recognised as a ground of mercy.

Or the cutting off of hands
And feet from opposite sides,⁷³⁹
Or exile from the land :
That is their disgrace
In this world, and
A heavy punishment is theirs
In the Hereafter;

أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ
أَوْ يُنْفَخُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ
ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ٥

37. Except for those who repent
Before they fall
Into your power :
In that case, know
That God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

٣٧- إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا
مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ٤

SECTION 6.

38. **O**h ye who believe !
Do your duty to God,⁷⁴⁰
Seek the means
Of approach unto Him,
And strive with might
And main in His cause :
That ye may prosper.⁷⁴¹

٣٨- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ
وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ٥

39. As to those who reject
Faith,—if they had
Everything on earth,
And twice repeated,
To give as ransom
For the penalty of the Day
Of Judgment, it would
Never be accepted of them.
Theirs would be
A grievous Penalty.

٣٩- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لَوْ أَنَّ لَهُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا
وَمِثْلَهُ مَعًا
لَيُفْتَلَدُوا بِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ
مَا تُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ أَعْدَابُ الْيَمِّ ٥

40. Their wish will be
To get out of the Fire,
But never will they
Get out therefrom :

٤٠- يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُخْرَجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ
وَمَا هُمْ بِمُخْرَجِينَ مِنْهَا ٥

739. Understood to mean a hand and an arm from each side.

740. *Taqwâ* here too might be translated "fear of God", but the very next clause shows that "fear of God" does not mean "fear" in the ordinary sense, which would make you avoid the object of fear. On the contrary the "fear of God" is the intense desire to avoid everything that is against His Will and Law. It is in fact duty to God, for we are told to seek ardently the means by which we may approach Him, and that can only be done by striving with might and main for His cause.

741. "Prosper" in the spiritual sense, for that is all that matters, as the life of this world is brief and fleeting, and of small account as against Eternity.

Their Penalty will be
One that endures.

وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ۝

41. ~~As~~ to the thief,⁷⁴²
Male or female,
Cut off his or her hands:
A punishment by way
Of example, from God,
For their crime:
And God is Exalted, Wise.

۴۱- وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ
فَأُفْطِرُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً
بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝

42. But if the thief repent
After his crime,
And amend his conduct,
God turneth to him
In forgiveness; for God
Is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

۴۲- فَتَن تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝

43. Knowest thou not⁷⁴³
That to God (alone)
Belongeth the dominion
Of the heavens and the earth?
He punisheth whom He pleaseth,
And He forgiveth whom He
pleaseth:
And God hath power
Over all things.

۴۳- أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ
أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
يُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ
وَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝

44. ~~Oh~~ Apostle! let not
Those grieve thee, who race
Each other into Unbelief:⁷⁴⁴
Those who say "We believe"
With their lips but
Whose hearts have no faith;

۴۴- يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ لَا يَحْزُنْكَ الَّذِينَ
يُسَارِكُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ
قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِمَا نَفْوَاهُمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۝

742. Here we touch upon jurisprudence. The Canon Law jurists are not unanimous as to the value of the property stolen, which would involve the penalty of the cutting off of the hand. The majority hold that petty thefts are exempt from this punishment. The general opinion is that only one hand should be cut off for the first theft, on the principle that "if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee" (Matt. xviii. 8). Apparently in the age of Jesus thieves were crucified (Matt. xxvii. 38).

743. Punishment really does not belong to mortals, but to God alone. Only, in order to keep civil society together, and protect innocent people from crime, certain principles are laid down on which people can build up their criminal law. But we must always remember that God not only punishes but forgives, and forgiveness is the attribute which is more prominently placed before us. It is not our wisdom that can really define the bounds of forgiveness or punishment, but His Will or Plan, which is the true standard of righteousness and justice.

744. Two classes of men are meant, viz., the Hypocrites and the Jews. For both of them Mustafâ laboured earnestly and assiduously, and it must have been a cause of great grief and disappointment to him that they showed so much insincerity, cunning, and hardness of heart. These are types not yet extinct.

And the Jews, who will listen
To any lie,—will listen
Even to others who have
Never so much as come ⁷⁴⁵
To thee. They change the words
From their (right) times ⁷⁴⁶
And places; they say,
"If ye are given this,
Take it, but if not,
Beware!" If any one's trial
Is intended by God, thou hast
No authority in the least
For him against God.
For such—it is not
God's will to purify
Their hearts. For them
There is nothing but disgrace
In this world, and
In the Hereafter
A heavy punishment.

وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا سَمْعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ
سَمْعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتُواكَ
بِخَزْفَتٍ مِنَ الْكَلِمِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوَاضِعِهِ
يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أَوْرَثْنَا هَذَا أَخَذْنَاهُ
وَلَنْ نَكُونَهُ فَاحْذَرُوا
وَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ
فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا
أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ
أَنْ يُطَهِّرْ قُلُوبَهُمْ لَكُمْ فِي ذَلِكَ نَذِيرٌ
وَلَكُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ٥

45. (They are fond of) listening
To falsehood, of devouring ⁷⁴⁷
Anything forbidden.
If they do come to thee,
Either judge between them,
Or decline to interfere.
If thou decline, they cannot
Hurt thee in the least.
If thou judge, judge
In equity between them. ⁷⁴⁸
For God loveth those
Who judge in equity.

٣٥- سَمْعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ أَكْثَرُونَ لِلسَّخَةِ
فَإِنْ جَاءَكَ فَاعْلَمْ بَيْنَهُمْ أَوْ أَعْرِضْ
عَنْهُمْ وَإِنْ تُعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ
فَلَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ شَيْئًا
وَلَنْ حَكَمْتَ فَاعْلَمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ٥

745. The Jews were eager to catch up any lie against the Apostle. They had their ears open even to tales from people who had never so much as come near to the Apostle. If we understand "for" instead of "to" before "others" (for the Arabic word would bear both meanings), the sense will be: They are keen listeners or spies for any lies they can catch; and they will act as spies for others (their Rabbis, etc.) who are in the background but to whom they carry false tales.

746. Cf. v. 14. The addition of the words *min ba'di* here suggests the change of words from their right times as well as places. They did not deal honestly with their Law, and misapplied it, by distorting the meaning. Or it may be that as tale-bearers they distorted the meaning by misrepresenting the context.

747. *Devouring anything forbidden*: both in a literal and in a figurative sense. In the figurative sense, it would be: the taking of usury or bribes, or taking undue advantage of people's weak position or their own fiduciary powers to add to their own wealth.

748. Where it is merely a trick to catch out the unwary, a just man may honourably decline to interfere in a cause submitted to him, as also in a case where the parties are not honestly desirous of justice, but each hopes that some partiality will be shown to it.

46. But why do they come⁷⁴⁹
 To thee for decision,
 When they have (their own)
 Law before them?—
 Therein is the (plain)
 Command of God; yet
 Even after that, they would
 Turn away. For they
 Are not (really)
 People of Faith

٣٧- وَكَيْفَ يُحْكَمُونَكَ
 وَعِنْدَهُمُ التَّوْرَةُ
 فِيهَا حُكْمُ اللَّهِ
 ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
 وَمَا أُولَئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

C. 73.—True justice accords with God's Law.

- (v. 47—89.) Follow not men's selfish desires,
 But God's Will, which was revealed
 To Moses and Jesus, and now to Muḥammad.
 Take not for friends and protectors
 Those in whose hearts is a disease,—
 To whom religion is a mockery
 Or a plaything,—who worship evil.
 Proclaim the Truth of God, and be
 Not afraid. Eschew their iniquities,
 Which were denounced by David
 And Jesus. But recognise with justice
 Those who are sincere and humble,
 Though they may be themselves
 Not of your flock, if they witness to Truth.

SECTION 7.

47. It was We who revealed
 The Law to Moses: therein
 Was guidance and light.⁷⁵⁰
 By its standard have been judged
 The Jews, by the Prophets
 Who bowed (as in Islam)
 To God's Will, by the Rabbis⁷⁵¹
 And the Doctors of Law:

٣٨- إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ
 يُحْكَمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا
 لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا
 وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَابُ

749. This is a searching question as to the motive of the Jews in bringing their cases for decision to the Apostle. They came either (1) to ridicule whatever he said, or (2) to deceive him as to facts and snatch a favourable decision which was against equity. If their own Law did not suit their selfish interests, they sometimes twisted it. But Muḥammad was always inflexible in his justice.

750. *Guidance*, with reference to conduct; *light*, with reference to insight into the higher realms of the spirit.

751. *Rabbānī* may, I think, be rightly translated by the Jewish title of *Rabbi* for their learned men. Jewish learning is identified with Rabbinical literature. *Aḥbār* is the plural of *ḥibr* or *ḥabr*, by which we may understand Jewish Doctors of Law. Later the term was applied to those of other religions. Query: Is the word connected with the same root as "Hebrew", or "Eber" (Gen. x. 21), the ancestor of the Hebrew race? This seems negatived by the fact that the Arabic root connected with the word "Hebrew" is 'Abar, not Ḥabar.

For to them was entrusted
The protection of God's Book,
And they were witnesses thereto :⁷⁵²
Therefore fear not men,
But fear Me, and sell not
My Signs for a miserable price.⁷⁵³
If any do fail to judge
By (the light of) what God
Hath revealed, they are
(No better than) Unbelievers.

بِمَا اسْتَوْفُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ
شُهَدَاءَ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَاحْشَوْنَ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ○

48. We ordained therein for them :⁷⁵⁴
"Life for life, eye for eye,
Nose for nose, ear for ear,
Tooth for tooth, and wounds
Equal for equal." But if
Any one remits the retaliation
By way of charity, it is
An act of atonement for himself.⁷⁵⁵
And if any fail to judge
By (the light of) what God
Hath revealed, they are
(No better than) wrongdoers.⁷⁵⁶

٣٨- وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا
أَنْقِ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ
وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ وَالْأُذْنَ بِالْأُذْنِ
وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصٌ
فَمَنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ وَمَنْ لَمْ
يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ○

49. And in their footsteps
We sent Jesus the son

٣٩- وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَى آلِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنِ

752. They were living witnesses to the truth of Scripture, and could testify that they had made it known to the people : Cf. ii. 143, and iv. 135.

753. Two charges are made against the Jews : (1) that even the books which they had, they twisted in meaning, to suit their own purposes, because they feared men rather than God : (2) that what they had was but fragments of the original Law given to Moses, mixed up with a lot of semi-historical and legendary matter, and some fine poetry. The *Taurāt* mentioned in the Qurān is not the Old Testament as we have it ; nor is it even the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament, containing the Law embedded in a great deal of semi-historical and legendary narrative). See Appendix II, on the *Taurāt* (to be printed at the end of this Sūra).

754. The retaliation is prescribed in three places in the Pentateuch, viz., Exod. xxi. 23-25 ; Leviticus xxiv. 18-21, and Deut. xix. 21. The wording in the three quotations is different, but in none of them is found the additional rider for mercy, as here. Note that in Matt. v. 38, Jesus quotes the Old Law "eye for eye," etc., and modifies it in the direction of forgiveness, but the Quranic injunction is more practical. This appeal for mercy is as between man and man in the spiritual world. Even where the injured one forgives, the State or Ruler is competent to take such action as is necessary for the preservation of law and order in Society. For crime has a bearing that goes beyond the interests of the person injured : the Community is affected : see Q. v. 35.

755. This is not part of the Mosaic Law, but the teaching of Jesus and of Muḥammad. Notice how the teaching of Jesus is gradually introduced as leading up to the Qurān.

756. The seeming repetitions at the end of verses 47, 48, and 50 are not real repetitions. The significant words in the three cases are : Unbelievers, wrong-doers, and rebellious ; and each fits the context. If the Jews tamper with their books they are Unbelievers ; if they give false judgments, they are wrong-doers. If the Christians follow not their light, they are rebellious.

Of Mary, confirming
The Law that had come
Before him : We sent him
The Gospel : therein
Was guidance and light,⁷⁵⁷
And confirmation of the Law
That had come before him :
A guidance and a warning
To those who fear God.

50. Let the People of the Gospel
Judge by what God hath revealed
Therein. If any do fail
To judge by (the light of)
What God hath revealed,
They are (no better than)
Those who rebel.⁷⁵⁸

51. ~~And~~ To thee We sent a Scripture
In truth, confirming
The scripture that came
Before it, and guarding it⁷⁵⁹
In safety : so judge
Between them by what
God hath revealed,
And follow not their vain
Desires, diverging
From the Truth that hath come
To thee. To each among you
Have We prescribed a Law
And an Open Way.⁷⁶⁰
If God had so willed,
He would have made you⁷⁶¹
A single People, but (His

مَرْحَمَةً مُّصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ
وَإِنْشَاءً لِّلْإِنْجِيلِ فِيهِ هُدًى وَتُورَةٌ
وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ
وَهُدًى
وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ۝

٥٠- وَلِيُحْكَمْ أَهْلَ الْإِنْجِيلِ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ فِيهِ ۖ
وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ۝

٥١- وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ
بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ
الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ
فَأَحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ رِئَاسَتِهِمْ
عَنِ الْجَاهِلِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۖ
لِيُجَلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شُرْعَةً وَمِنْهَا جَا
وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً

757. *Guidance and light*: see n. 750 above. For the meaning of the Gospel (Injil), see Appendix III, "On the *Injil*" (to be printed at the end of this Sūra).

758. See n. 756 above.

759. After the corruption of the older revelations, the Qurān comes with a twofold purpose : (1) to confirm the true and original Message, and (2) to guard it, or act as a check to its interpretation. For example, if people seek retaliation in a spirit of revenge, it holds forth mercy. If they glibly mask their cowardice or sentimentalism by empty talk of "turning the other cheek," it tests them by the practical test of forgiveness and mercy.

760. *Law*: *shir'at*=rules of practical conduct. *Open Way*: *Minhāj*=the finer things which are above the law, but which are yet available to every one, like a sort of open highway. The *light* in vv. 47 and 49 above, I understand to be something in the still higher regions of the spirit, which is common to mankind, though laws and rules may take different forms among different Peoples.

761. By origin mankind were a single people or nation : iv. 1, and ii. 213. That being so, God could have kept us all alike, with one language, one kind of disposition, and one set of physical conditions (including climate) to live in. But in His wisdom, He gives us diversity in these things, not only at any given time, but in different periods and ages. This tests our capacity for Unity (*Waḥdāniyat*) still more, and accentuates the need of Unity and Islam.

Plan is) to test you in what
He hath given you : so strive
As in a race in all virtues.
The goal of you all is to God ;
It is He that will show you
The truth of the matters
In which ye dispute; ⁷⁶²

52. And this (He commands) :
Judge thou between them
By what God hath revealed,
And follow not their vain
Desires, but beware of them
Lest they beguile thee
From any of that (teaching)
Which God hath sent down
To thee. And if they turn
Away, be assured that
For some of their crimes
It is God's purpose to punish
Them. And truly most men
Are rebellious.

53. Do they then seek after
A judgment of (the Days ⁷⁶³
Of) Ignorance? But who,
For a people whose faith
Is assured, can give
Better judgment than God?

SECTION 8.

54. **O**h ye who believe !
Take not the Jews
And the Christians
For your friends and protectors : ⁷⁶⁴
They are but friends and protectors
To each other. And he

وَلَكِنْ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ
فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْحَيَاتِ
إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا
فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ۝
٥٢-وَإِنْ أَحْكَمَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَأْتِزِلَ اللَّهُ
وَلَا تَقْبِضُوا أَعْيُنَكُمْ
وَأَحْذَرُهُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنُواكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا
أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۚ إِنَّ تَوَلَّوْا
فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحْصِيَ لَهُمْ
بَعْضَ ذُنُوبِهِمْ ۚ
وَلَا تَكُنْزِلًا مِنَ النَّاسِ لَافِسُونَ ۝

٥٣-أَفَتُحْكُمُ الْبَغَايَةَ يَنْبَغُونَ
وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِقَوْمٍ
يُوقِنُونَ ۝

٥٤-يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى أَوْلِيَاءَ
بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَنْ

762. As our true goal is God, the things that seem different to us from different points of view, will ultimately be reconciled in Him. Einstein is right in plumbing the depths of Relativity in the world of physical science. It points more and more to the need of Unity in God in the spiritual world.

763. The Days of Ignorance were the days of tribalism, feuds, and selfish accentuation of differences in man. Those days are really not yet over. It is the mission of Islam to take us away from that false mental attitude, towards the true attitude of Unity. If our Faith is certain (and not merely a matter of words), God will guide us to that Unity.

764. That is, look not to them for help and comfort. They are more likely to combine against you than to help you. And this happened more than once in the lifetime of the Apostle, and in after-ages again and again. He who associates with them and shares their counsels must be counted as of them. The trimmer loses whichever way the wheel of fortune turns.

Amongst you that turns to them
(For friendship) is of them.
Verily God guideth not
A people unjust.

55. Those in whose hearts ⁷⁶⁵

Is a disease—thou seest
How eagerly they run about
Amongst them, saying :
"We do fear lest a change
Of fortune bring us disaster."
Ah ! perhaps God will give
(Thee) victory, or a decision
According to His Will.
Then will they repent
Of the thoughts which they secretly
Harboured in their hearts.

56. And those who believe

Will say : "Are these
The men who swore
Their strongest oaths by God,
That they were with you ?" ⁷⁶⁶
All that they do
Will be in vain,
And they will fall
Into (nothing but) ruin.

57. ⁷⁶⁷Oh ye who believe !

If any from among you
Turn back from his Faith,
Soon will God produce
A people whom He will love
As they will love Him,—
Lowly with the Believers,
Mighty against the Rejecters,
Fighting in the Way of God,
And never afraid
Of the reproaches

يَتَوَلَّوْهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَأَنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

٥٥- فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ
يُسَارِعُونَ فِيهِمْ
يَقُولُونَ خَشِيَ أَنْ تَصِيبَنَا دَافِعَةٌ
فَعَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ
عِنْدِهِ فَيُضْطَرُّوا
عَلَى مَا أَسْرَوْا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ لِمَا مَرَيْنَ

٥٦- وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ
أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ
إِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ
حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ
فَأَصْبَحُوا خَاسِرِينَ

٥٧- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
مَنْ يَرْتَدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ
فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ
أُولَئِكَ عَلَى النُّبُوِّينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ
يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ

765. Cf. ii. 10.

766. The Hypocrites, while matters were doubtful, pretended to be with Muslims, but were in league with their enemies. When matters came to a decision and God granted victory to Islam, their position was awkward. They were not only disowned by the Muslims, but the Muslims could well say in reproach to their enemies : "Are these the men who swore friendship for you ? What was their friendship worth to you ? Where are they now ?"

Of such as find fault,⁷⁶⁷
That is the Grace of God,
Which He will bestow
On whom He pleaseth.
And God's bounty is for all,
And He knoweth all things.

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ
يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٥٨

58. Your (real) friends are
(No less than) God,
His Apostle, and the (Fellowship
Of) Believers, — those who
Establish regular prayers
And regular charity,
And it is they who bow
Down humbly (in worship).

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا
الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ ٥٩

59. As to those who turn
(For friendship) to God,
His Apostle, and the (Fellowship
Of) Believers, — it is
The Fellowship of God
That must certainly triumph.

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ٦٠

SECTION 9.

60. **٥٦** Who ye who believe !
Take not for friends
And protectors those
Who take your religion
For a mockery or sport, —⁷⁶⁸
Whether among those
Who received the Scripture
Before you, or among those

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَكُمْ هُزُوًا
وَلَعِبًا
مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أَوْفُوا بِالْكِتَابِ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ

767. As "most men are rebellious" (v. 52), it is inevitable that there should be apostates even from such a religion of reason and common-sense as Islam. But here is a warning to the Muslim body that they should not repeat the history of the Jews, and become so self-satisfied or arrogant as to depart from the spirit of God's teaching. If they do, the loss will be their own. God's bounty is not confined to one group or section of humanity. He can always raise up people who will follow the true spirit of Islam. That spirit is defined in two ways : first in general terms ; they will love God and God will love them ; and secondly, by specific signs ; amongst the Brethren, their attitude will be that of humility, but to wrong-doers they will offer no mealy-mouthed compromises ; they will always strive and fight for truth and right ; they will know no fear, either physical, or that more insidious form, which says : " What will people say if we act thus ? " They are too great in mind to be haunted by any such thought. For, as the next verse says, their friends are God, His Apostle, and His people, the people who judge rightly, without fear or favour.

768. It is not right that we should be in intimate association with those to whom religion is either a subject of mockery or at best is nothing but a plaything. They may be amused, or they may have other motives for encouraging you. But your association with them will sap the earnestness of your Faith, and make you cynical and insincere.

Who reject Faith;
But fear ye God,
If ye have Faith (indeed).

61. When ye proclaim
Your call to prayer,
They take it (but)
As mockery and sport;
That is because they are
A people without understanding.

62. Say : "Oh People of the Book !
Do ye disapprove of us
For no other reason than
That we believe in God,
And the revelation
That hath come to us
And that which came
Before (us), and (perhaps)
That most of you
Are rebellious and disobedient ?" ⁷⁶⁹

63. Say : "Shall I point out
To you something much worse
Than this, (as judged)
By the treatment it received
From God ? Those who
Incurred the curse of God
And His wrath, those of whom some
He transformed into apes and
swine, ⁷⁷⁰
Those who worshipped Evil ;—
These are (many times) worse
In rank, and far more astray
From the even Path !"

64. ~~When~~ When they come to thee,
They say : " We believe " :

وَالْكَافِرَ أَزْوَاجًا
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ كُنتُمْ مَوْءِدِينَ ○

٦١- وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ
اتَّخَذُوا هُزُوءًا وَلَعِبًا
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ○

٦٢- قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ
هَلْ تَنْقُضُونَ مِيثَاقَ اللَّهِ أَنْ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ
وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا
وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَأَنْ أَكْفَرْتُمْ فَيُفْسِقُونَ ○

٦٣- قُلْ هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِشَرٍّ مِنْ ذَلِكَ
مَثُوبَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
مَنْ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَعَظِبَ عَلَيْهِ
وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمْ الْفِرْدَوْسَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ
الطَّاغُوتَ
أُولَئِكَ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا
وَأَضَلُّ عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ○
٦٤- وَإِذَا جَاءَ وَكُمُ قَالُوا آمَنَّا

769. There is the most biting irony in this and the next verse. 'You People of the Book ! Do you hate us because we believe in God and not only our scripture, but yours also ? Perhaps you hate us because we obey and you are in rebellion against God ! Why hate us ? There are worse things than our obedience and our Faith. Shall I tell you some of them ? Our test will be : what treatment God meted out to the things I mention. Who were the people who incurred the curse of God ? (See Deut. xi. 28, and xxviii. 15-68 ; and numerous passages like Hosea viii. 14, and ix. 1.) Who provoked God's wrath ? (See numerous passages like Deut. i. 34 ; Matt. iii. 7.) Who forsook God, and worshipped evil ? (See Jeremiah, xvi. 11-13.) That is your record. Is that why you hate us ?'

770. For apes see Q. ii. 65. For men possessed by devils, and the devils being sent into swine, see Matt. viii 28-32. Or perhaps both apes and swine are allegorical : those who falsified God's scriptures became lawless like apes, and those who succumbed to filth, gluttony, or gross living became like swine.

But in fact they enter
With a mind against Faith,
And they go out
With the same.
But God knoweth fully
All that they hide.

وَقَدْ كُذِّبُوا بِالْكَفْرِ
وَهُمْ قَدْ خَرَجُوا بِهِ
وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْتُمُونَ

65. Many of them dost thou
See, racing each other
In sin and hatred,
And their eating of things ⁷⁷¹
Forbidden. Evil indeed
Are the things that they do.

٦٥- وَتَرَى كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ يَسَارِعُونَ فِي
الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَأَكْلِهِمُ الشَّحْتِ
لَيْشَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

66. Why do not the Rabbis
And the doctors of law forbid
Them from their (habit
Of) uttering sinful words
And eating things forbidden?
Evil indeed are their works.

٦٦- لَوْلَا يَنْهَاهُمُ الرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ
عَنْ قَوْلِهِمُ الْإِثْمَ وَأَكْلِهِمُ الشَّحْتِ
لَيْشَ مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ

67. The Jews say : "God's hand ⁷⁷²
Is tied up." Be *their* hands
Tied up and be they accursed
For the (blasphemy) they utter.
Nay, both His hands
Are widely outstretched :
He giveth and spendeth
(Of His bounty) as He pleaseth.
But the revelation that
Cometh to thee from God
Increaseth in most of them
Their obstinate rebellion ⁷⁷³
And blasphemy. Amongst them
We have placed enmity ⁷⁷⁴

٦٧- وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ
خُلِّتْ يَدَاهُمَ وَلَعْنُوا بِهِمَا كَالْوَا
بِلْ يَدُهُ مَبْسُوطَتَيْنِ
يُنْفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ
وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ
مِمَّا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا
وَالْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ

771. *Eating of things forbidden*: may be construed in a literal or a figurative sense. From its juxtaposition with sin and hatred, it is better to construe it in a figurative sense, as referring to their fraudulent misappropriations of other people's property or trust property. "Eating" is used in v. 69 below in the general sense of enjoyment and happiness.

772. Cf. v. 13, and ii. 245, for a "beautiful loan to God", and iii. 181, for the blasphemous taunt, "Then God is poor!" It is another form of the taunt to say, "Then God's hands are tied up, He is close-fisted, He does not give!" This blasphemy is repudiated. On the contrary, boundless is God's bounty, and He gives, as it were, with both hands outstretched,—a figure of speech for unbounded liberality.

773 Their jealousy—because Muṣṭafā is chosen for God's Message—is so great that it only confirms and strengthens their rebellion and blasphemy.


774. Cf. v. 15, where the eternal warring of the Christian sects, among themselves and against the Jews, is referred to. The reference is to the whole of the People of the Book, Jews and Christians,—their internal squabbles and their external disputes, quarrels, and wars.

And hatred till the Day
Of Judgment. Every time
They kindle the fire of war,
God doth extinguish it ;
But they (ever) strive
To do mischief on earth.
And God loveth not
Those who do mischief.⁷⁷⁵

68. If only the People of the Book
Had believed and been righteous,
We should indeed have
Blotted out their iniquities
And admitted them
To Gardens of Bliss.

69. If only they had stood fast
By the Law, the Gospel,
And all the revelation that was sent
To them from their Lord,
They would have enjoyed
Happiness from every side.⁷⁷⁶
There is from among them
A party on the right course :
But many of them
Follow a course that is evil.

SECTION 10.

70.  Apostle! proclaim
The (Message) which hath been
Sent to thee from thy Lord.⁷⁷⁷
If thou didst not, thou

وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ
كُلَّمَا أَوقَدُوا نَارًا لِلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ
وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا
وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ○

٦٨- وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا
لَكُنَّا عَنْهُمْ سَبِيلًا
وَلَدْخَلْنَاهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ التَّوَارِثِ ○

٦٩- وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوَارِثَ وَالْإِجْبِلَ
وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
لَأَكَلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ
وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَنْجَرِهِمْ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّهُ مُقْتَصِدٌ
وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ۝

٧٠- يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ
مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۚ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ

775. The argument of the whole verse may be thus stated. The Jews blaspheme and mock, and because of their jealousy, the more they are taught, the more obstinate they become in their rebellion. But what good will it do to them? Their selfishness and spite sow quarrels among themselves, which will not be healed till the Day of Judgment. When they stir up wars, especially against the innocent, God's Mercy is poured down like a flood of water to extinguish them. But their wickedness continues to devise ever new mischief. And God loves not mischief or those who do mischief.

776. The literal translation of the two lines would be: "They would have eaten from above them and from below their feet." To eat (*akala*) is a very comprehensive word, and denotes enjoyment generally, physical, social, mental and moral, and spiritual. "To eat what is forbidden" in *vv.* 65 and 66 referred to taking unlawful profit, from usury or trust funds or in other ways. Here "eating" would seem to mean receiving satisfaction or happiness in ordinary life as well as in the spiritual world. "From above them" may refer to heavenly or spiritual satisfaction, and "from below their feet" to earthly satisfaction. But it is better to take the words as a general idiom, and understand "satisfaction or happiness from every side."

777. Muhammad had many difficulties to contend with, many enemies and dangers to avoid. This is to assure him that his Message was true and from God. His mission must be fulfilled. And he must—as he did—go forward and proclaim that Message and fulfil his mission, trusting to God for protection, and unconcerned if people who had lost all sense of right rejected it or threatened him.

Wouldst not have fulfilled
And proclaimed His Mission.
And God will defend thee
From men (who mean mischief).
For God guideth not
Those who reject Faith.

71. Say: "Oh People of the Book!
Ye have no ground
To stand upon unless
Ye stand fast by the Law,
The Gospel, and all the revelation
That has come to you from
Your Lord." It is the revelation
That cometh to thee from
Thy Lord, that increaseth in most
Of them their obstinate
Rebellion and blasphemy.
But sorrow thou not
Over (these) people without
Faith.⁷⁷⁸

72. Those who believe (in the Qurān),
Those who follow the Jewish
(scriptures),
And the Sabians and the
Christians,—
Any who believe in God
And the Last Day,
And work righteousness,—⁷⁷⁹
On them shall be no fear,
Nor shall they grieve.

73. We took the Covenant
Of the Children of Israel
And sent them apostles.
Every time there came
To them an apostle
With what they themselves
Desired not—some
(Of these) they called

فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ○

١- قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ
حَتَّى تَقِيمُوا الشُّرُوعَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ
وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
وَلَتُرِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ
مِنْ رَبِّكَ
طُعْيَانًا وَكَفْرًا
فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ○

٢- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئِينَ وَالنَّصَارَى
مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا
فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ○

٣- لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ
وَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الرُّسُلَ
كُلَّمَا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ
بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى أَنْفُسُهُمْ فَرِيقًا

778. In v. 29 Moses was told not to sorrow over a rebellious people. Here Muhammad is told not to sorrow over people without Faith. The second situation is even more trying than the first. Rebellion may be a passing phase. Want of faith is an attitude of mind that is well-nigh hopeless. Yet the Apostle patiently reasoned with them and bore their taunts and insults. If the argument runs, you do not believe in anything, even in the things that you may be expected to believe in, how can you receive in Faith God's Message that has come in another form? In fact your jealousy adds to your obstinacy and unbelief.

779. Cf. ii. 62. As God's Message is one, Islam recognises true faith in other forms, provided that it be sincere, supported by reason, and backed up by righteous conduct. Note 76 explains who the Sabians were.

Impostors, and some they
(Go so far as to) slay.⁷⁸⁰

74. They thought there would be
No trial (or punishment);
So they became blind and deaf; ⁷⁸¹
Yet God (in mercy) turned
To them; yet again many
Of them became blind and deaf.
But God sees well
All that they do.

75. They do blaspheme who say:
"God is Christ the son
Of Mary." But said Christ: ⁷⁸²
"Oh Children of Israel!
Worship God, my Lord
And your Lord." Whoever
Joins other gods with God,—
God will forbid him
The Garden, and the Fire
Will be his abode. There will
For the wrongdoers
Be no one to help.

76. They do blaspheme who say:
God is one of three
In a Trinity: for there is
No god except One God.
If they desist not
From their word (of blasphemy),
Verily a grievous penalty
Will befall the blasphemers
Among them.

77. Why turn they not to God,
And seek His forgiveness?
For God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

78. Christ the son of Mary
Was no more than
An apostle; many were
The apostles that passed away

كَذَّبُوا وَفَرَّقُوا يَفْتَلُونَ ○

٤٣- وَحَسِبُوا اَلَا نَكُونُ فِتْنَةً فَعَمُوا
صَمُّوا ثُمَّ تَابَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ
ثُمَّ عَمُوا وَصَلُّوا كَثِيْرًا مِنْهُمْ
وَاللّٰهُ بَصِيْرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ○

٤٤- لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ
الْمَسِيْحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
وَقَالَ الْمَسِيْحُ يَبْنٰى اِسْرَءِيْلَ اَعْبُدُوْا
اللّٰهَ رَبِّيْ وَرَبَّكُمْ اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ
فَقَدْ حَزَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ
وَمَا وِلْدَةُ الْكَافِرِ وَمَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ مِنْ اَنْصَارٍ

٤٥- لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ ثَالِثُ
ثَلَاثَةٍ وَمَا مِنْ اِلٰهٍ اِلَّا اِلٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ
وَ اِنْ لَّهِ يَنْتَقِهُنَّ
عَمَّا يَقُوْلُوْنَ لِيَمَسَّحَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
مِنْهُمْ عَدَابُ الْاَلَمِ ○

٤٦- اَفَلَا يَتُوْبُوْنَ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ
وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ○

٤٨- مَا الْمَسِيْحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اِلَّا رَسُوْلٌ
قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ الرُّسُلُ

780. Cf. ii. 87, and n. 91.

781. That is, they turned away their eyes from God's Signs and they turned a deaf ear to God's Message.

782. Cf. Matt. iv. 10, where Christ rebukes Satan for desiring the worship of other than God; John xx. 17, where Christ says to Mary Magdalene, "Go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." Cf. also Luke xviii. 19, where Christ rebukes a certain ruler for calling him Good Master: "Why callest thou me good? None is good, save One, that is, God." In Mark xii. 25 Jesus says: "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is One Lord."

Before him. His mother
Was a woman of truth.⁷⁸³
They had both to eat
Their (daily) food.
See how God doth make
His Signs clear to them;⁷⁸⁴
Yet see in what ways
They are deluded
Away from the truth!

79. Say: "Will ye worship,
Besides God, something
Which hath no power either
To harm or benefit you?
But God,—He it is
That heareth and knoweth
All things."

80. Say: "Oh People of the Book!
Exceed not in your religion⁷⁸⁵
The bounds (of what is proper),
Trespassing beyond the truth,
Nor follow the vain desires
Of people who went wrong
In times gone by,—who misled
Many, and strayed (themselves)
From the even Way.

SECTION 11.

81. Curses were pronounced
On those among the Children
Of Israel who rejected Faith,
By the tongue of David⁷⁸⁶
And of Jesus the son of Mary:⁷⁸⁷
Because they disobeyed
And persisted in excesses.

وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ
كَانَا يَأْكُلَانِ الطَّعَامَ
انْظُرْ كَيْفَ بُدِّلَ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ
ثُمَّ انْظُرْ إِلَى يَوْمِئِذٍ يَكُونُونَ

٤٩- قُلْ اتَّبِعُونِ مَنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا
وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

٨٠- قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ
لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَأَضَلُّوا كَيْدًا
وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ

٨١- لَعْنُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ
عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ
ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ

783. She never claimed that she was a mother of God, or that her son was God. She was a pious virtuous woman.

784. Note how logically the argument has led up from Jewish back-slidings and want of faith, to blasphemies associated with the names of Jesus and Mary, and in the following verses to the worship of senseless stocks and stones. God is One; His Message is one; yet how people's perversity transforms truth into falsehood, religion into superstition!

785. Excess, as opposed to moderation and reason, is the simplest test by which a hypocrite or a selfish man who "trades" on religion, is known from a sincere, pious, and truly religious man. Excess means that truth is sometimes concealed or trampled upon, that the fashions of ancestors or contemporaries are copied or overdone, and God's name is dishonoured by blasphemies or the setting up of false gods or fetishes, or that good (or even bad) men are deified and worshipped. The true path is the even path, the path of rectitude. (Cf. ii. 108, and v. 13).

786. The Psalms of David have several passages of imprecations against the wicked. Cf. Psalms cix. 17-18; lxxviii. 21-22 ("Therefore the Lord heard this and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; because they believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation"); Psalms lxi. 22-28, and Psalms v. 10.

787. Cf. Matt. xxiii. 33 ("Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?"), also Matt. xii. 34.

82. Nor did they (usually)
 Forbid one another⁷⁸⁸
 The iniquities which they
 Committed: evil indeed
 Were the deeds which they did.

83. Thou seest many of them
 Turning in friendship
 To the Unbelievers.
 Evil are (the works) which
 Their souls have sent forward
 Before them, (with the result)
 That God's wrath
 Is on them,
 And in torment
 Will they abide.

84. If only they had believed
 In God, in the Apostle,
 And in what hath been
 Revealed to him, never
 Would they have taken
 Them for friends and protectors,
 But most of them are
 Rebellious wrongdoers.

85. Strongest among men in enmity
 To the Believers wilt thou
 Find the Jews and Pagans;
 And nearest among them in love
 To the Believers wilt thou
 Find those who say,⁷⁸⁹
 "We are Christians":
 Because amongst these are
 Men devoted to learning⁷⁹⁰
 And men who have renounced
 6 The world, and they
 30 Are not arrogant.

٨٢- كَانُوا لَا يَنْذَاهُونَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ
 لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ○

٨٣- تَرَى كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ
 يَتَوَلَّوْنَ الْكَافِرِينَ كَفَرُوا
 لَبِئْسَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ
 أَنْ سَخِطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ
 وَفِي الْعَذَابِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ ○

٨٤- وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
 وَمَا أُنْزِلَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ
 مَا اتَّخَذُوا لَهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
 وَلَكِنْ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ فَسِقُونَ ○

٨٥- لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً لِلَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا
 وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقْرَبَهُمْ مَوَدَّةً لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَحْنُ الَّذِينَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْكَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا
 قُرْآنًا فِيهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ ○

788. There are bad men in every community, but if leaders connive at the misdeeds of the commonality,—and even worse, if leaders themselves share in the misdeeds, as happened with the Pharisees and Scribes against whom Jesus spoke out, then that community is doomed.

789. The meaning is not that they merely call themselves Christians, but that they are such sincere Christians that they appreciate Muslim virtues, as did the Abyssinians to whom Muslim refugees went during the persecution in Mecca. They would say: "It is true we are Christians, but we understand your point of view, and we know you are good men." They are Muslims at heart, whatever their label may be.

790. *Qissas*: I have translated as "devoted to learning," following the Commentators. It seems to be a foreign word, possibly Abyssinian rather than Syriac, as the reference seems to be to the Abyssinian Christians. Their real devotion to learning and the renunciation of the world by the Monastic Orders are contrasted with the hypocrisy and arrogance of the Pharisees and Scribes.

86. And when they listen
To the revelation received
By the Apostle, thou wilt
See their eyes overflowing
With tears, for they
Recognize the truth :
They pray : " Our Lord !
We believe ; write us
Down among the witnesses.

87. " What cause can we have
Not to believe in God
And the truth which has
Come to us, seeing that
We long for our Lord
To admit us to the company
Of the righteous ? "

88. And for this their prayer
Hath God rewarded them
With Gardens, with rivers
Flowing underneath,— their eternal
Home. Such is the recompense
Of those who do good.

89. But those who reject Faith
And belie Our Signs,—
They shall be Companions
Of Hell-fire.

٨٦- وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ
تَرَىٰ أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ
مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ
يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا
فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ○

٨٧- وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ
وَمَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ
وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ يُدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا
مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

٨٨- فَأَنَابَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ○

٨٩- وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ○

C. 74.—In the physical pleasures of life

- (v. 90—111.) The crime is excess : there is no merit
In abstinence from things that are good
And lawful. Take no rash vows,
But to solemn oaths be faithful. Shun
As abominations drinking and gambling
And superstitions of all kinds.
But be reverent to what is sacred
In rites and associations. Not the same
Are things good and things evil.
Learn to distinguish, but pry not
Into questions beyond your ken.
Guard your own souls in truth
And justice, and no harm can befall you.

SECTION 12.

90. ○ Who ye who believe !
Make not unlawful

٩٠- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُحَرِّمُوا

The good things which God
Hath made lawful for you,
But commit no excess : ⁷⁹¹
For God loveth not
Those given to excess.

91. Eat of the things which
God hath provided for you,
Lawful and good ; but fear
God, in Whom ye believe.

92. God will not call you
To account for what is
Futile in your oaths, ⁷⁹²
But He will call you
To account for your deliberate
Oaths : for expiation, feed
Ten indigent persons,
On a scale of the average
For the food of your families ;
Or clothe them ; or give
A slave his freedom.
If that is beyond your means,
Fast for three days.
That is the expiation
For the oaths ye have sworn.
But keep to your oaths.
Thus doth God make clear
His Signs, that ye
May be grateful.

93. Oh ye who believe !
Intoxicants and gambling, ⁷⁹³

طَيِّبَتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
وَلَا تَعْثُرُوا

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ○

٩١- وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ○

٩٢- لَا يُوَاحِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ إِيْمَانَكُمْ
وَلَكِنْ يُوَاحِدُكُمْ بِمَا عَقَدْتُمُ الْإِيْمَانَ
كَفَّارَةٌ إِنْطَعَامُ عَشْرَةِ مَسْكِينٍ
مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ
أَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ
فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ
كَفَّارَةُ إِيْمَانِكُمْ إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ
وَاحْفَظُوا إِيْمَانَكُمْ
كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ○

٩٣- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْمُورُ

791. In pleasures that are good and lawful the crime is excess. There is no merit merely in abstinence or asceticism, though the humility or unselfishness that may go with asceticism may have its value. In v. 85 Christian monks are praised for particular virtues, though here and elsewhere monasticism is disapproved of. Use God's gifts of all kinds with gratitude, but excess is not approved of by God.

792. Vows of penance or abstinence may sometimes be futile, or even stand in the way of a really good or virtuous act. See ii. 224—226, and notes. The general principles established are : (1) take no futile oaths ; (2) use not God's name, literally or in intention, to fetter yourself against doing a lawful or good act ; (3) keep to your solemn oaths to the utmost of your ability ; (4) where you are unable to do so, expiate your failure by feeding or clothing the poor, or obtaining some one's freedom, or if you have not the means, by fasting. This is from a spiritual aspect. If any party suffers damage from your failure, compensation will be due to him, but that would be a question of law or equity.

(Dedication of) stones,⁷⁹⁴
 And (divination by) arrows,⁷⁹⁵
 Are an abomination,—
 Of Satan's handiwork :
 Eschew such (abomination),
 That ye may prosper.

94. Satan's plan is (but)
 To excite enmity and hatred
 Between you, with intoxicants
 And gambling, and hinder you
 From the remembrance
 Of God, and from prayer :
 Will ye not then abstain ?

95. Obey God, and obey the Apostle,⁷⁹⁶
 And beware (of evil) :
 If ye do turn back,
 Know ye that it is
 Our Apostle's duty
 To proclaim (the Message)⁷⁹⁷
 In the clearest manner.

96. On those who believe
 And do deeds of righteousness
 There is no blame
 For what they eat,
 When they guard themselves
 From evil, and believe,
 And do deeds of righteousness,—
 (Or) again, guard themselves
 From evil and believe,—
 (Or) again, guard themselves
 From evil and do good.

وَالْأَنْصَابَ وَالْأَزْلَامَ
 رَجَسَ مَنْ عَمِلَ الشَّيْطَانِ
 فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ○

۹۴- إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ
 أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي
 الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ
 وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ ○

۹۵- وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ
 وَاحْذَرُوا
 فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا إِنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِنَا
 الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ○

۹۶- لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
 الصَّالِحَاتِ
 جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعَوْا إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا
 وَآمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَآمَنُوا
 ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَأَحْسِنُوا

794. Cf. v. 4. The stones there referred to were stone altars or stone columns on which oil was poured for consecration, or slabs on which meat was sacrificed to idols. Any idolatrous or superstitious practices are here condemned. The *anṣāb* were objects of worship, and were common in Arabia before Islam. See Renan, "History of Israel", Chapter iv, and *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, Part I, p. 154 : Illustrations Nos. 123 and 123 bis are Phœnician columns of that kind, found in Malta.

795. Cf. v. 4. The arrows there referred to were used for the division of meat by a sort of lottery or raffle. But arrows were also used for divination, i.e., for ascertaining lucky or unlucky moments, or learning the wishes of the heathen gods, as to whether men should undertake certain actions or not. All superstitions are condemned.

796. We are asked to obey the commands of God (which are always reasonable), instead of following superstitions, (which are irrational), or seeking undue stimulation in intoxicants or undue advantage in gambling. To some there may be temporary excitement or pleasure in these, but that is not the way either of prosperity or piety.

797. Cf. v. 70. Both the worldly and the spiritual aspects of loss are pointed out. Can God's Message do more ?

For God loveth those.
Who do good.⁷⁹⁸

SECTION 13.

97. Oh ye who believe !
God will make a trial of you
In a little matter
Of game well within reach
Of your hands and your lances,
That He may test ⁷⁹⁹
Who feareth Him unseen :
Any who transgress
Thereafter, will have
A grievous penalty.
98. Oh ye who believe !
Kill not game
While in the Sacred
Precincts or in pilgrim garb. ⁸⁰⁰
If any of you doth so
Intentionally, his expiation
Is: an offering, made
To the Ka'ba, of an animal
Equivalent to the one he killed,⁸⁰¹

وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ٥

٩٧- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَيَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ اللَّهُ
بَشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الصَّيْدِ تَنَالَهُ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَ
رِمَاحُكُمْ لِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَخَافُهُ بِالْغَيْبِ
فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ
فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ٥

٩٨- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ
وَأَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ
وَمَن قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُّتَعَذِّبًا
فَبِزَاءٍ مِّثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ

798. There is a subtle symphony in what appears at first sight to be a triple repetition. The relation of such simple regulations as those of food, or game, or the reverence due to a sacred place or sacred institution, has to be explained *vis-a-vis* man's higher duties. Baighawt is right in classifying such duties under three heads: those due to God, those due from a man to himself (his self-respect), and those due to other creatures of God. Or perhaps all duties have this threefold aspect. The first may be called Believing or Faith; the second, Guarding ourselves from evil, or Conscience; and the third, doing good or Righteousness. But the simplest physical rules, *e.g.*, those about eating, cleanliness, etc., if they are good, refer also to the higher aspects. If we eat bad food, we hurt ourselves, we cause offence to our neighbours, and we disobey God. If we have faith and righteousness, are we likely to be wanting in conscience? If we have conscience and faith, are we likely to fail in righteousness? If we have conscience and righteousness, what can be their foundation but faith? All three manifest themselves in a willing obedience to God, and love for Him. We realise His love in loving and doing good to His creatures, and our love for Him is meaningless without such good.

799. Literally, "know". Cf. iii. 166, and iii. 154, n. 467. Game is forbidden in the Sacred Precincts. If we deliberately break that injunction, we have no faith and reverence.

800. See v. 2, and n. 684. 'The pilgrim garb, *ihram*, has been explained in n. 212, ii. 196.

801. For an inadvertent breach of the game rule there is apparently no penalty. Intentional breach will be punished, if possible, by preventive action. If in some case the preventive action is not effective, the penalty is prescribed. The penalty is in three alternatives: an equivalent animal should be presented to the Ka'ba for sacrifice; if so, the meat would be distributed to the poor; or the poor must be fed, with grain or money, according to the value of the animal if one had been sacrificed; or the offender must fast as many days as the number of the poor who would have been fed under the second alternative. Probably the last alternative would only be open if the offender is too poor to afford the first or second, but on this point Commentators are not agreed. The "equivalent animal" in the first alternative would be one of similar value or weight in meat or of similar shape (*e.g.*, goat to antelope), as adjudged by two just men on he spot.

The alternatives about the penalty and its remission ("God will forgive what is past") or exaction explain the last two lines of the verse: being "Exalted and Lord of Retribution", God can remit or regulate according to His just laws.

As adjudged by two just men
Among you; or the feeding
Of the indigent; or its
Equivalent in fasts: that he
May taste of the penalty
Of his deed. God will
Forgive what is past:
For repetition God will
Exact from him the penalty.
For God is Exalted,
And Lord of Retribution.

99. Lawful to you is the pursuit ⁸⁰²
Of water-game and its use
For food,—for the benefit
Of yourselves and those who
Travel; but forbidden
Is the pursuit of land-game;—
As long as ye are
In the Sacred Precincts
Or in pilgrim garb.
And fear God, to Whom
Ye shall be gathered back.

100. God made the Ka'ba,
The Sacred House, an asylum
Of security for men, as
Also the Sacred Months, ⁸⁰³
The animals for offerings,
And the garlands that mark
them: ⁸⁰⁴
That ye may know
That God hath knowledge
Of what is in the heavens
And on earth and that God
Is well-acquainted
With all things. ⁸⁰⁵

101. Know ye that God
Is strict in punishment

يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ هَدْيًا بِلِئَةِ
الْكَفَّةِ أَوْ كَفَّارَةً بِطَعَامٍ مَسْكِينٍ
أَوْ عَدْلَ ذَلِكَ صِيَامًا لِيَذُوقَ وَبَالَ
أَمْرِهِ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَمَّا سَلَفُ
وَمَنْ عَادَ فَيَنْتَقِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ
وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ ○

٩٩- أَحِلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ وَطَعَامُهُ
مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِلسَّيَافَةِ
وَحُرْمَةُ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَرِّ
مَا دُمْتُمْ حُرُمًا
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ○

١٠٠- جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ
الْحَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَمًا لِلنَّاسِ
وَالشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ
وَالْهَدْيَ وَالْقَلَائِدَ
ذَلِكَ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ بِحُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ○
١٠١- اعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

802. *Water-game*: i.e. game found in water, e.g., water-fowl, fish, etc. "Water" includes sea, river, lake, pond, etc.

803. The Sacred or Prohibited Months are explained in n. 209, ii. 194, and n. 687, v. 3.

804. See v. 3 and n. 688.

805. All sorts of people from all parts of the earth gather during the Pilgrimage. They must not think that they are strangers, that nobody knows them, and that they may behave as they like. It is the House of God, and He has supreme knowledge of all things, of all thoughts, and all motives. As the next verse says, while He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful, He is also strict in enforcing respect for His ordinances.

And that God is
Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

102. The Apostle's duty is
But to proclaim (the Message).
But God knoweth all
That ye reveal and ye conceal.

103. Say: "Not equal are things
That are bad and things
That are good, even though
The abundance of the bad
May dazzle thee; ⁸⁰⁶
But fear God, oh ye
That understand;
That (so) ye may prosper."

SECTION 14.

104. **Oh** ye who believe!
Ask not questions
About things which,
If made plain to you,
May cause you trouble
But if ye ask about things
When the Qurān is being
Revealed, they will be
Made plain to you. ⁸⁰⁷
God will forgive those:
For God is Oft-forgiving,
Most Forbearing.

105. Some people before you
Did ask such questions, ⁸⁰⁸

وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

١٠٢- مَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُونَ

١٠٣- قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَيْرُ
وَالضَّرُّ وَلَوْ أَجْمَلْتَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَيْرِ
فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلَحُونَ

١٠٤

١٠٤- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَسْأَلُوا
عَنْ أَشْيَاءَ إِنْ تُبْدَ لَكُمْ تَسْأَلُكُمْ
وَلَنْ تَسْأَلُوا
عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنْزَلُ الْقُرْآنُ تُبْدَ لَكُمْ
عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهَا
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

١٠٥- قَدْ سَأَلَهَا قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ

806. C. ii. 204. People often judge by quantity rather than quality. They are dazzled by numbers: their hearts are captured by what they see everywhere around them. But the man of understanding and discrimination judges by a different standard. He knows that good and bad things are not to be lumped together, and carefully chooses the best, which may be the scarcest, and avoids the bad, though evil may meet him at every step.

807. Many secrets are wisely hidden from us. If the future were known to us, we need not necessarily be happy. In many cases we should be miserable. If the inner meaning of some of the things we see before our eyes were disclosed to us, it might cause a lot of mischief. God's Message, in so far as it is necessary for shaping our conduct, is plain and open to us. But there are many things too deep for us to understand, either individually or collectively. It would be foolish to pry into them, as some foolish people tried to do in the time of the Apostle. Where a matter is mentioned in the Qurān, we can reverently ask for its meaning. That is not forbidden. But we should never pass the bounds of (1) our own capacity to understand, (2) the time and occasion when we ask questions, and (3) the part of the Universal Plan which it is God's purpose to reveal to us.

808. For example, the merely fractious questions asked of Moses by the Jews: Q. ii. 68-71. They showed that they had no faith. When foolish questions are asked, and there is no answer, it also shakes the faith of the foolish ones.

And on that account
Lost their faith.

106. It was not God
Who instituted (superstitions ⁸⁰⁹
Like those of) a slit-ear
She-camel, or a she-camel
Let loose for free pasture,
Or idol sacrifices for
Twin-births in animals,
Or stallion-camels
Freed from work :
It was blasphemers
Who invented a lie
Against God ; but most
Of them lack wisdom.
107. When it is said to them :
" Come to what God
Hath revealed ; come
To the Apostle " :
They say : " Enough for us ⁸¹⁰
Are the ways we found
Our fathers following."
What ! even though their fathers
Were void of knowledge
And guidance ?
108. Oh ye who believe !
Guard your own souls :
If ye follow (right) guidance,
No hurt can come to you
From those who stray.
The goal of you all
Is to God : it is He
That will show you
The truth of all
That ye do. ⁸¹¹

ثُمَّ أَصْبَحُوا بِهَا كَافِرِينَ ○

١٠٦- مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَحِيرَةٍ

وَلَا سَائِبَةٍ

وَلَا وَحِيلَةٍ

وَلَا حَامٍ

وَلَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

يَقْتُرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ

وَكَذَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ○

١٠٧- وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى مَا أَنْزَلَ

اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ

قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا

أَوَلَوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ شَيْئًا

وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ○

١٠٨- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ

أَنْفُسُكُمْ

لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ

إِلَى اللَّهِ مُرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا

فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ○

809. A number of Arab Pagan superstitions are referred to. The Pagan mind, not understanding the hidden secrets of nature, attributed certain phenomena to divine anger and were assailed by superstitious fears which haunted their lives. If a she-camel or other female domestic animal had a large number of young, she (or one of her offsprings) had her ear slit and she was dedicated to a god : such an animal was a *baḥīra*. On return in safety from a journey, or on recovery from an illness a she-camel was similarly dedicated and let loose for free pasture ; she was called a *sāiba*. Where an animal bore twins, certain sacrifices or dedications were made to idols : an animal so dedicated was a *waṣīla*. A stallion-camel dedicated to the gods by certain rites was a *ḥām*. The particular examples lead to the general truth : that superstition is due to ignorance, and is degrading to men and dishonouring to God.

810. C. ii, 170. Where an apostle of Truth comes to teach us the better way, it is foolish to say : " What our ancestors did is good enough for us."

811. Cf. v. 51. There the unity of God will reconcile different views. The unity of the one Judge will do perfect justice to each one's conduct, however different in form it may have appeared in this world.

109. Oh ye who believe !
 When death approaches
 Any of you, (take) witnesses
 Among yourselves when making
 Bequests,—two just men
 Of your own (brotherhood)
 Or others from outside
 If ye are journeying
 Through the earth,
 And the chance of death
 Befalls you (thus).
 If ye doubt (their truth),
 Detain them both
 After prayer, and let them both
 Swear by God :
 "We wish not in this
 For any worldly gain,
 Even though the (beneficiary)
 Be our near relation :
 We shall hide not
 The evidence before God :
 If we do, then behold !
 The sin be upon us !" ⁸¹²

110. But if it gets known
 That these two were guilty
 Of the sin (of perjury),
 Let two others stand forth
 In their places,—nearest
 In kin from among those
 Who claim a lawful right: ⁸¹³
 Let them swear by God :
 "We affirm that our witness
 Is truer than that
 Of those two, and that we
 Have not trespassed (beyond
 The truth) : if we did,
 Behold ! the wrong be
 Upon us !"

111. That is most suitable :
 That they may give the evidence

١٠٩-يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا شَهَادَةُ بَيْنِكُمْ
 إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ
 حَتَّى الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنَيْنِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ
 أَوْ آخَرَيْنِ مِّنْ غَيْرِكُمْ
 إِنْ أَنْتُمْ حَرَيْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 فَأَصَابَكُمْ مُصِيبَةُ الْمَوْتِ
 تَحْسِبُونَهُمَا مِنْ بَعْدِ الصَّلَاةِ
 فَيُقْسِمْنَ بِاللَّهِ
 إِنْ أَتَيْنَكُمُ لَا تَنْفَعُنِي بِهِ كُنَّا
 وَلَوْ كَانُوا قُرْبَىٰ
 وَلَا تَكُنْ لَهُمَا شَهَادَةُ اللَّهِ
 إِنْكَارًا إِذَا لَيْسَ الْأَثَمُ

١١٠-فَإِنْ عُرِيَ عَلَىٰ آثَمًا اسْتَحَقَّ آثَمًا
 فَآخَرَيْنِ يَقُومْنَ مَقَامَهُمَا
 مِنَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَوَّلَيْنِ
 فَيُقْسِمْنَ بِاللَّهِ
 لَشَهَادَتُنَا أَحَقُّ مِنْ شَهَادَتِهِمَا
 وَمَا عَدَدْنَاهُ
 إِنْكَارًا إِذَا لَيْسَ الظَّالِمِينَ

١١١-ذَلِكَ أَذْنَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِالشَّهَادَةِ

⁸¹². Ordinarily this oath should be decisive, and the matter must rest here. But if it gets known that the oath was false, other evidence may be taken as in the next verse.

⁸¹³. *Istahajqa* = Deserved having something (good or evil) attributed to one; hence the alternative meanings: (1) committed or was guilty (of a sin); (2) had or claimed a lawful right (to property). The procedure was followed in an actual case in the Apostle's lifetime. A man from Medina died abroad, having made over his goods to two friends, to be delivered to his designated heirs in Medina. They, however, kept back a valuable silver cup. When this was found out, oaths were taken from those who knew, and justice was done.

In its true nature and shape,
Or else they would fear
That other oaths would be
Taken after their oaths.
But fear God, and listen
(To His counsel) : for God
Guideth not a rebellious people.

عَلَى وَجْهِهَا أَوْ يَخَافُوا أَنْ تُرَدَّ آيَمَانُ
بَعْدَ آيَمَانِهِمْ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ وَاسْمَعُوا
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ۝

C. 75.—Jesus did feed his disciples by miracle,
(v. 112 123.) But he claimed not divinity : he was
A true servant of God, to Whom doth belong
The dominion of the heavens and the earth :
Glory and power are His, and His alone.

SECTION 15.

112. One day will God
Gather the apostles together,
And ask : " What was
The response ye received
(From men to your teaching) ? "
They will say : " We
Have no knowledge : it is Thou
Who knowest in full
All that is hidden." ⁸¹⁴

١١٢-يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ
فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أَجَبْتُمُ
قَالُوا لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ۝

113. When will God say :
" Oh Jesus the son of Mary !
Recount My favour ⁸¹⁶
To thee and to thy mother.
Behold ! I strengthened thee ⁸¹⁶
With the holy spirit,
So that thou didst speak
To the people in childhood
And in maturity. ⁸¹⁷
Behold ! I taught thee
The Book and Wisdom, ⁸¹⁸
The Law and the Gospel.
And behold ! thou makest ⁸¹⁹
Out of clay, as it were,

١١٣-إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ لِيَعْقُوبَ ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ
اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَتِكَ
إِذْ أَيَّدْتُكَ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ
تَكَلَّمَ النَّاسُ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا
وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ
وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ

814. A scene of the Day of Reckoning is put before us in graphic words, showing the responsibility and the limitations of the men of God, sent to preach God's Message to men, with special reference to the Message of Jesus. The Messengers are sent to preach the Truth. What fantastic forms the Message takes in men's reactions to it was beyond their knowledge at the time, and beyond their responsibility.

815. In a solemn scene before the Court of Judgment, Jesus is asked to recount all the mercies and favours shown to him, so that his followers should become ashamed of their ingratitude in corrupting that Message, when they could have done so much in profiting by its purity and spiritual truth. This argument continues to the end of the Sūra.

816. Cf. ii. 87, and iii. 62, n. 401.

817. Cf. iii. 46, and n. 388.

818. Cf. iii. 48.

819. Cf. iii. 49, and n. 390.

The figure of a bird,
 By My leave,
 And thou breathest into it,
 And it becometh a bird
 By My leave, ~~775-776~~
 And thou healest those
 Born blind, and the lepers
 By My leave.
 And behold! thou
 Bringest forth the dead
 By My leave.⁸²⁰
 And behold! I did
 Restrain the Children of Israel
 From (violence to) thee⁸²¹
 When thou didst show them
 The Clear Signs,
 And the unbelievers among them
 Said: 'This is nothing
 But evident magic.'⁸²²

114. "And behold! I inspired
 The Disciples to have faith
 In Me and Mine Apostle:
 They said, 'We have faith,
 And do thou⁸²³ bear witness
 That we bow to God
 As Muslims'." ⁸²⁴

115. the Disciples said:
 "Oh Jesus the son of Mary!
 Can thy Lord send down to us
 A Table set (with viands)

820. Note how the words "by My leave" are repeated with each miracle to emphasize the fact that they arose, not out of the power or will of Jesus, but by the leave and will and power of God, who is supreme over Jesus as He is over all other mortals.

821. The Jews were seeking to take the life of Jesus long before their final attempt to crucify him: see Luke iv. 28-29. Their attempt to crucify him was also foiled, according to the teaching we have received: Q. iv. 157.

822. According to Luke (xi. 15), when Christ performed the miracle of casting out devils, the Jews said he did it through the chief of the devils, i. e., they accused him of black magic. No such miracle of casting out devils is mentioned in the Qurān, nor are we asked to believe in demoniacal possession of that kind. But Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad were all accused of magic and sorcery, by those who could find no other explanation of God's power.

823. "Thou" refers to Jesus, who is being addressed by his Disciples. Cf. iii. 52.

824. Before or after Muḥammad's life on this earth, all who bowed to God's Will were Muslims, and their religion is Islam. Cf. iii. 52, and n. 392.

From heaven ?" Said Jesus :
" Fear God, if ye have faith." ⁸²⁵

مِنَ السَّمَاءِ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ لَكُمْ مَعَهُ مَوَافِقِينَ

116. They said : " We only wish
To eat thereof and satisfy
Our hearts, and to know
That thou hast indeed
Told us the truth ; and
That we ourselves may be
Witnesses to the miracle."

١١٦- قَالُوا نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَأْكُلَ مِنْهَا وَ
نَشْبِعَ مِنْهَا قُلُوبُنَا
وَنَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ صَدَقْتُنَا
الْحَقَّ وَنَكُونَ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ○

117. Said Jesus the son of Mary :
" Oh God our Lord !
Send us from heaven
A Table set (with viands), ⁸²⁶
That there may be for us—
For the first and the last of us—
A solemn festival
And a Sign from Thee ;
And provide for our sustenance, ⁸²⁷
For Thou art the best
Sustainer (of our needs)."

١١٧- قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا
أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيدًا لِأَوَّلِنَا وَآخِرِنَا
وَآيَةً مِنْكَ
وَارْزُقْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ ○

118. God said : " I will
Send it down unto you :
But if any of you
After that resisteth faith,
I will punish him
With a penalty such
As I have not inflicted
On any one among

١١٨- قَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مُنْزِلُهَا عَلَيْكُمْ
فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ
فَأُولَئِكَ أَعْدَابُ عَدَايَا
لَا أَعْدَابُ أَحَدٍ مِنَ

825. The request of the Disciples savours a little of (1) want of faith, (2) too much attention to physical food, and (3) a childish desire for miracles or Signs. All these three can be proved from the Canonical Gospels. (1) Simon Peter, quite early in the story, asked Jesus to depart from him, as he (Simon) was a sinful man (Luke v. 8). The same Peter afterwards denied his Master three several times shamelessly when the Master was in the power of his enemies. And one of the Disciples (Judas) actually betrayed Jesus. (2) Even in the Canonical Gospels, so many of the miracles are concerned with food and drink ; e. g., the turning of the water into wine (John. ii. 1-11) ; the conversion of five loaves and two small fishes into food for 5,000 men (John vi. 5-13), this being the *only* miracle recorded in all the four Gospels ; the miraculous number of fishes caught for food (Luke v. 4-11) ; the cursing of the fig tree because it had no fruit (Matt. xxi. 18-19) ; the allegory of eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood (John vi. 53-57). (3) Because the Samaritans would not receive Jesus into their village, the Disciples James and John wanted a fire to come down from heaven and consume them (Luke ix. 54).

826. The words of the Prayer seem to suggest the Last Supper. Cf. also the vision of Peter in " The Acts of the Apostles ", x. 9-16.

827. As in Islam, so in Christ's Prayer, sustenance should be taken for both physical and spiritual strength, especially the latter. " Give us this day our daily bread " seems the rendering of a literalist whose attention was fixed too much on bread.

All the peoples."⁸²⁸

SECTION 16.

119. And behold! God will say:
 "Oh Jesus the son of Mary!
 Didst thou say unto men,
 'Worship me and my mother
 As gods in derogation of God'?"
 He will say: "Glory to Thee!
 Never could I say
 What I had no right
 (To say). Had I said
 Such a thing, Thou wouldst
 Indeed have known it.
 Thou knowest what is
 In my heart, though I
 Know not what is
 In Thine. For Thou
 Knowest in full
 All that is hidden."⁸²⁹

120. "Never said I to them
 Aught except what Thou
 Didst command me
 To say, to wit, 'Worship
 God, my Lord and your Lord';⁸³⁰
 And I was a witness
 Over them whilst I dwelt
 Amongst them; when Thou
 Didst take me up,
 Thou wast the Watcher
 Over them, and Thou
 Art a witness to all things."⁸³¹

121. "If Thou dost punish them,
 They are Thy servants:

الْعَالَمِينَ ٥

١١٩- وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يٰعِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
 ءَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي
 إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
 قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ
 مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِمَحْجُزٍ
 إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ
 تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي
 وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ
 إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ٥

١٢٠- مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ
 أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ
 وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا
 مَا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي
 كُنْتُ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ
 وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ٥

١٢١- إِنْ تَعَذَّبْ بِهِمْ فَأَنْتُمْ عِبَادُكَ

828. A forceful allegory. It is a wicked generation that asks for Signs and Miracles. Usually they are not vouchsafed. But where they are, the responsibility of those who ask for them is increased. If, after that, they reject faith, invent lies, and go after false gods or false ideals, their penalty will be worse than that of other people. How this works out practically among those who call themselves Christians is exemplified in such books as the late Mr. W. T. Stead's "If Christ Came to Chicago?"

829. Jesus disclaims here any knowledge of the sort of things that are attributed to him by those who take his name. The worship of Mary, though repudiated by the Protestants, was widely spread in the earlier Churches, both in the East and the West.

830. Cf. v. 75, and n. 782.

831. Jesus here acknowledges that he was mortal, and that his knowledge was limited like that of a mortal.

If Thou dost forgive them,
Thou art the Exalted,
The Wise." ⁸³²

122. God will say : " This is
A day on which
The truthful will profit
From their truth : theirs
Are Gardens, with rivers
Flowing beneath, — their eternal
Home : God well-pleased
With them, and they with God :
That is the great 'Salvation', ⁸³³
(The fulfilment of all desires).

123. To God doth belong the dominion
Of the heavens and the earth,
And all that is therein,
And it is He who hath power
Over all things.

وَأَن تَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ
فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ۝
١٢٢- قَالَ اللَّهُ هَذَا يَوْمُ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ
صُدُقُهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ
ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ۝

١٢٣- لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا فِيهِنَّ
وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝



832. A Master can justly punish His servants for disobedience: no one can say Him nay, for He is high above all. But if He chooses to forgive, He in His wisdom sees things that we mortals cannot see. This is the limit of intercession that men of God can make on behalf of sinners.

833. *Fawz* = Felicity, happiness, achievement, salvation, the attainment or fulfilment of desires. What a beautiful definition of salvation or the end of life! — that we should win God's good pleasure and that we should reach the stage at which His good pleasure is all-in-all to us.

APPENDIX II.

On the *Taurāt* (see v. 47, n. 753).

The *Taurāt* is frequently referred to in the Qurān. It is well to have clear ideas as to what it exactly means. Vaguely we may say that it was the Jewish Scripture. It is mentioned with honour as having been, in its purity, a true revelation from God.

To translate it by the words "The Old Testament" is obviously wrong. The "Old Testament" is a Christian term, applied to a body of old Jewish records. The Protestants and the Roman Catholics are not agreed precisely as to the number of records to be included in the canon of the "Old Testament." They use the term in contradistinction to the "New Testament," whose composition we shall discuss in Appendix III.

Nor is it correct to translate *Taurāt* as the "Pentateuch," a Greek term meaning the "Five Books." These are the first five books of the Old Testament, known as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They contain a semi-historical and legendary narrative of the history of the world from the Creation to the time of the arrival of the Jews in the Promised Land. There are in them some beautiful idylls but there are also stories of incest, fraud, cruelty, and treachery, not always disapproved. A great part of the Mosaic Law is embodied in this narrative. The Books are traditionally ascribed to Moses, but it is certain that they were not written by Moses or in an age either contemporary with Moses or within an appreciable distance of time from Moses. They were in their present form probably compiled some time after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian Captivity. The decree of Cyrus permitting such return was in 536 B.C. Some books now included in the Old Testament, such as Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were admittedly written after the return from the Captivity, Malachi being as late as 420-397 B.C. The compilers of the Pentateuch of course used some ancient material: some of that material is actually named. Egyptian and Chaldean terms are relics of local colour and contemporary documents.

But there are some ludicrous slips, which show that the compilers did not always understand their material. Modern criticism distinguishes two distinct sources among the documents of different dates used by the editors. For the sake of brevity and convenience they may be called (a) Jehovistic, and (b) Elohist. Then there are later miscellaneous interpolations. They sometimes overlap and sometimes contradict each other.

Logically speaking, the Book of Joshua, which describes the entry into the Promised Land, should be bracketed with the Pentateuch, and many writers speak of the six books together as the Hexateuch (Greek term for Six Books).

The Apocrypha contains certain Books which are not admitted as Canonical in the English Bible. But the early Christians received them as part of the Jewish Scriptures, and the Council of Trent (A.D. 1545-1563) seems to have recognized the greater part of them as Canonical. The statement in 2 Esdras (about the first century

A.D.) that the law was burnt and Ezra (say, about 458-457 B.C.) was inspired to re-write it, is probably true as to the historical fact that the law was lost, and that what we have now is no earlier than the time of Ezra, or some of it a good deal later.

So far we have spoken of the Christian view of the Old Testament. What is the Jewish view? The Jews divide their Scripture into three parts: (1) the Law (*Torah*), (2) the Prophets (*Nebiim*), and (3) the Writings (*Kethubim*). The corresponding Arabic words would be: (1) *Taurât*, (2) *Nabiyin*, and (3) *Kutub*. This division was probably current in the time of Jesus. In Luke xxiv. 44 Jesus refers to the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. In other places (e.g., Matt. vii. 12) Jesus refers to the Law and the Prophets as summing up the whole Scripture. In the Old Testament Book, 2 Chronicles xxxiv. 30, the reference to the Book of the Covenant must be to the *Torah* or the original Law. This is interesting, as the Qurân frequently refers to the Covenant with reference to the Jews. The modern Christian terms "Old Testament" and "New Testament" are substitutes for the older terms "Old Covenant" and "New Covenant." The Samaritans, who claim to be the real Children of Israel and disavow the Jews as schismatics from their Law of Moses, only recognise the Pentateuch, of which they have their own version slightly different from that in the Old Testament.

The view of the school of Higher Criticism is radically destructive. According to Renan it is doubtful whether Moses was not a myth. Two versions of Sacred History existed, different in language, style, and spirit, and they were combined together into a narrative in the reign of Hezekiah (B.C. 727-697). This forms the greater part of the Pentateuch as it exists to-day, excluding the greater part of Deuteronomy and Leviticus. In the reign of Josiah about 622 B.C., certain priests and scribes (with Jeremiah the prophet) promulgated a new code, pretending that they had found it in the Temple (II Kings, xxii. 8). This Law (*Torah*=*Taurât*) was the basis of Judaism, the new religion then founded in Palestine. This was further completed by the sacerdotal and Levitical *Torah*, compiled under the inspiration of Ezekiel, say, about 575 B.C., and contained mainly in the Book of Leviticus, with scattered fragments in Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua. We are entitled to accept the general results of a scientific examination of documents, probabilities, and dates, even though we reject the premise which we believe to be false, *viz.*, that God does not send inspired Books through inspired Prophets. We believe that Moses existed; that he was an inspired man of God; that he gave a message which was afterwards distorted or lost; that attempts were made by Israel at various times to reconstruct that Message; and that the *Taurât* as we have it is (in view of the statement in 2 Esdras) no earlier than the middle of fifth century B.C.

The primitive *Torah* must have been in old Hebrew, but there is no Hebrew manuscript of the Old Testament which can be dated with certainty earlier than 916 A.D. Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language with the Jews during or after the Captivity, and by the time we come to the period of Jesus, most cultivated Hebrews used the Greek language, and others used Aramaic (including Syriac and Chaldee), Latin, or local dialects. There were also Arabic versions. For historical purposes the most important versions were the Greek version, known as the Septuagint, and the Latin version, known as the Vulgate. The Septuagint was supposed to have been prepared by 70 or 72 Jews (Latin, *septuaginta*=seventy) working independently and at different times, the earliest portion dating from about 284 B.C. This version was

used by the Jews of Alexandria and the Hellenized Jews who were spread over all parts of the Roman Empire. The Vulgate was a Latin translation made by the celebrated Father of the Christian Church, St. Jerome, from Hebrew, early in the fifth century A.D., superseding the older Latin versions. Neither the Septuagint nor the Vulgate have an absolutely fixed or certain text. The present standard text of the Vulgate as accepted by the Roman Catholic Church was issued by Pope Clement VIII (A.D. 1592-1605).

It will be seen therefore that there is no standard text of the Old Testament in its Hebrew form. The versions differ from each other frequently in minor particulars and sometimes in important particulars. The Pentateuch itself is only a small portion of the Old Testament. It is in narrative form, and includes the laws and regulations associated with the name of Moses, but probably compiled and edited from older sources by Ezra (or Esdras, Arabic, 'Uzair) in the 5th century B.C. As Renan remarks in the preface to his *History of the People of Israel*, the "definite constitution of Judaism" may be dated only from the time of Ezra. The very early Christians were divided into two parties. One was a Judaizing party, which wished to remain in adherence to the Jewish laws and customs while recognizing the mission of Jesus. The other, led by Paul, broke away from Jewish customs and traditions. Ultimately Pauline Christianity won. But both parties recognized the Old Testament in its present form (in one or another of its varying versions) as Scripture. It was the merit of Islam that it pointed out that as scripture it was of no value, although it recognized Moses as an inspired apostle and his original Law as having validity in his period until it was superseded. In its criticism of the Jewish position it said in effect: "You have lost your original Law; even what you have now as its substitute, you do not honestly follow; is it not better, now that an inspired Teacher is living among you, that you should follow him rather than quibble over uncertain texts?"

But the Jews in the Apostle's time (and since) went a great deal by the Talmud, or a body of oral exposition, reduced to writing in different Schools of doctors and learned men. "Talmud" in Hebrew is connected with the Arabic root in *Talmiz*, "disciple" or "student." The Talmudists took the divergent texts of the Old Testament and in interpreting them by a mass of traditional commentary and legendary lore, evolved a standard body of teaching. The Talmudists are of special interest to us, as, in the sixth century A.D., just before the preaching of Islam, they evolved the Massorah, which may be regarded as the body of authoritative Jewish Hadith, to which references are to be found in passages addressed to the Jews in the Qurān.

The first part of the Talmud is called the *Mishna*,—a collection of traditions and decisions prepared by the Rabbi Judah about 150 A.D. He summed up the results of a great mass of previous rabbinical writings. The *Mishna* is the "Second Law": Cf. the Arabic *Thān-in* = second. "It bound heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders": Matt. xxiii. 4.

There were also many Targums or paraphrases of the Law among the Jews. "Targum" is connected in root with the Arabic word *Tarjama*, "he translated." There were many Targums, mostly in Aramaic, and they constituted the teaching of the masses of the Jewish people.

The correct translation of the *Taurāt* is therefore "The Law." In its original form it was promulgated by Moses, and is recognized in Islam as having been an inspired Book. But it was lost before Islam was preached. What passed as "The Law" with the Jews in the Apostle's time was the mass of traditional writing which I have tried to review in this Appendix.

Authorities: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Bible"; *Helps to the Study of the Bible*, Oxford University Press; A. F. Kirkpatrick, *Divine Library of the Old Testament*; C. E. Hammond, *Outlines of Textual Criticism*; E. Renan, *History of Israel*; G. F. Moore, *Literature of the Old Testament*, and the bibliography therein (Home University Library).

APPENDIX III.

On the *Injil* (see v. 49, n. 757).

Just as the *Taurūt* is not the Old Testament, or the Pentateuch, as now received by the Jews and Christians, so the *Injil* mentioned in the Qurān is certainly not the New Testament, and it is not the four Gospels as now received by the Christian Church, but an original Gospel which was promulgated by Jesus, as the *Taurāt* was promulgated by Moses and the Qurān by Muḥammad Muṣṭafā.

The New Testament as now received consists of (a) four Gospels with varying contents (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John); and other miscellaneous matter; *viz.*, (b) The Acts of the Apostles (probably written by Luke and purporting to describe the progress of the Christian Church under St. Peter and St. Paul from the supposed Crucifixion of Jesus to about 61 A.D.); (c) twenty-one Letters or Epistles (the majority written by St. Paul to various churches or individuals, but a few written by other Disciples, and of a general nature); and (d) the Book of Revelation or Apocalypse (ascribed to St. John, and containing mystic visions and prophecies, of which it is difficult to understand the meaning).

As Prof. F. C. Burkitt remarks (*Canon of the New Testament*), it is an odd miscellany. "The four biographies of Jesus Christ.... are not all independent of each other, and neither of them was intended by its writer to form one of a quartette. But they are all put side by side, unharmonised, one of them being actually imperfect at the end, and one being only the first volume of a larger work." All this body of unmethodical literature was casual in its nature. No wonder, because the early Christians expected the end of the world very soon. The four canonical Gospels were only four out of many, and some others besides the four have survived. Each writer just wrote down some odd sayings of the Master that he recollected. Among the miracles described there is only one which is described in all the four Gospels, and others were described and believed in in other Gospels, which are not mentioned in any of the four canonical Gospels. Some of the Epistles contain expositions of doctrine, but this has been interpreted differently by different Churches. There must have been hundreds of such Epistles, and not all the Epistles now received as canonical were always so received or intended to be so received. The Apocalypse also was not the only one in the field. There were others. They were prophecies of "things which must shortly come to pass"; they could not have been meant for long preservation, "for the time is at hand."

When were these four Gospels written? By the end of the second century A.D. they were in existence, but it does not follow that they had been selected by that date to form a canon. They were merely pious productions comparable to Dean Farrar's *Life of Christ*. There were other Gospels besides. And further, the writers of two of them, Mark and Luke, were not among the Twelve Disciples "called" by Jesus. About the Gospel of St. John there is much controversy as to authorship, date, and even as to whether it was all written by one person. Clement of Rome (about 97 A.D.)

and Polycarp (about 112 A.D.) quote sayings of Jesus in a form different from those found in the present canonical Gospels. Polycarp (Epistle, vii) inveighs much against men "who pervert the sayings of the Lord to their own lusts," and he wants to turn "to the Word handed down to us from the beginning," thus referring to a Book (or a Tradition) much earlier than the four orthodox Gospels. An Epistle of St. Barnabas and an Apocalypse of St. Peter were recognized by Presbyter Clement of Alexandria (flourished about 180 A.D.). The Apocalypse of St. John, which is a part of the present Canon in the West, forms no part of the Peshitta (Syriac) version of the Eastern Christians, which was produced about 411-433 A.D. and which was used by the Nestorian Christians. It is probable that the Peshitta was the version (or an Arabic form of it) used by the Christians in Arabia in the time of the Apostle. The final form of the New Testament canon for the West was fixed in the fourth century A.D. (say, about 367 A.D.) by Athanasius and the Nicene creed. The beautiful Codex Sinaiticus which was acquired for the British Museum in 1934, and is one of the earliest complete manuscripts of the Bible, may be dated about the fourth century. It is written in the Greek language. Fragments of unknown Gospels have also been discovered, which do not agree with the received canonical Gospels.

The *Injil* (Greek, Evangel = Gospel) spoken of by the Qurān is not the New Testament. It is not the four Gospels now received as canonical. It is the single Gospel which, Islam teaches, was revealed to Jesus, and which he taught. Fragments of it survive in the received canonical Gospels and in some others, of which traces survive (e.g., the Gospel of Childhood or the Nativity, the Gospel of St. Barnabas, etc.). Muslims are therefore right in respecting the present Bible (New Testament and Old Testament), though they reject the peculiar doctrines taught by orthodox Christianity or Judaism. They claim to be in the true tradition of Abraham, and therefore all that is of value in the older revelations, it is claimed, is incorporated in the teaching of the Last of the Prophets.

In v. 85 we are told that nearest in love to the Believers among the People of the Book are the Christians. I do not agree that this does not apply to modern Christians "because they are practically atheists or freethinkers." I think that Christian thought (like the world's thought) has learnt a great deal from the protest of Islam against priest domination, class domination, and sectarianism, and its insistence on making this life pure and beautiful while we are in it. We must stretch a friendly hand to all who are sincere and in sympathy with our ideals.

Authorities: The first two mentioned for Appendix II, and in addition: Prof. F. C. Burkitt, on the Canon of the New Testament, in *Religion*, June 1934, the Journal of Transactions of the Society for Promoting the Study of Religion; R. W. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*; G. R. S. Mead, *The Gospel; and the Gospels*; B. W. Bacon, *Making of the New Testament*, with its Bibliography; R. Hone, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, London 1820; H. I. Bell and T. C. Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and other Christian Papyri*, published by the British Museum, 1935.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA VI (*An'ām*).

This is a Sūra of the late Meccan period. The greater part of it was revealed entire. Its place in the traditional order of arrangement is justified by logical considerations. We have already had the spiritual history of mankind, a discussion of the earlier revelations and how they were lost or corrupted, the regulations for the outer life of the new Community, and the points in which the Jews and Christians failed to maintain the central doctrine of Islam—the unity of God. The next step now taken is to expound this doctrine in relation to Pagan Arabia.

The nature of God and the method by which He reveals Himself are first expounded, and the weakness of Paganism is exposed (vi. 1—30, and C. 76).

The emptiness of this world's life is contrasted with the evidences of God's wonderful handiwork in all Creation. It is He who holds the keys of the Unseen and the secrets of all that we see (vi. 31—60, and C. 77).

God's working in His world and His constant care and guidance should give a clue to His unity, as it did to Abraham when he argued with those who worshipped false gods (vi. 61—82, and C. 78).

The succession of prophets after Abraham kept God's truth alive, and led up to the Qurān. How can man fail to understand the majesty and goodness of God, when he contemplates God's nature and His Messages to mankind? (vi. 83—110, and C. 79).

The obstinate and the rebellious are deceived: they should be avoided. Though they turn for assistance to each other, they will receive due punishment (vi. 111—129, and C. 80).

God's decrees will come to pass, in spite of all the crimes and superstitions of the ungodly (vi. 130—150, and C. 81).

The better course is to follow the straight Way, the Way of God, as directed in the Qurān, with unity and the full dedication of our lives (vi. 151—165, and C. 82).

C. 76.—God did separate Light from Darkness ;
 (vi. 1-30) He reigns not only in heaven but also
 On earth; Mercy is His Law ;
 To Him shall we all return
 At the end of all things. How can we
 Then depart from truth and forge lies
 Against Him? It is folly to say that there is
 Nothing beyond this our present life.

Sura VI.

An'ām, or Cattle.

In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. Praise be to God,
Who created the heavens
And the earth,
And made the Darkness
And the Light.
Yet those who reject Faith
Hold (others) as equal⁸³⁴
With their Guardian-Lord.⁸³⁵

2. He it is Who created⁸³⁶
You from clay, and then
Decreed a stated term⁸³⁷
(For you). And there is
In His Presence another
Determined term; yet
Ye doubt within yourselves!

3. And He is God
In the heavens
And on earth.
He knoweth what ye
Hide, and what ye reveal,
And He knoweth
The (recompense) which
Ye earn (by your deeds).⁸³⁸



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

۱- اُحْسَدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ

الْأَرْضِ

وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ

ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ

۲- هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ

ثُمَّ قَضَى أَجَلًا

وَأَجَلَ مُبْتَلًى عِنْدَهُ

ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُونَ

۳- وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ

يَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ

وَجَهْرَكُمْ

وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُونَ

834. 'Adala has various meanings: (1) to hold something as equal to something else, as here; to balance nicely; (2) to deal justly, as between one party and another, xlii. 15; (3) to give compensation or reparation, or something as equivalent to something else, vi. 70; (4) to turn the balance the right way, to give a right disposition, to give a just bias or proportion, lxxii. 7; (5) to turn the balance the wrong way, to swerve, to show bias, iv. 135.

835. The argument is threefold: (1) God created everything you see and know: how can you then set up any of His own creatures as equal to Him? (2) He is your own Guardian-Lord; He cherishes and loves you; how can you be so ungrateful as to run after something else? (3) Darkness and Light are to help you to distinguish between the true from the false: how then can you confound the true God with your false ideas and superstitions? There may also be a repudiation of the Duality of old Persian theology; Light and Darkness are not conflicting Powers; they are both creatures of the one true God.

836. After the general argument, the argument comes to man personally. Can such a miserable creature, created from clay, put himself in opposition to his Creator? And can man forget or doubt that he is here only for a short term of probation? And then, after a period, comes the Day of Account before God.

837. This life is a period of probation. The other term leads up to Judgment.

838. It is folly to suppose that God only reigns in the heavens. He also reigns on earth. He knows all our secret thoughts and motives, and the real worth of all that is behind what we care to show. It is by our deeds that He judges us; for our deeds, whether good or evil, we shall get due recompense in due time.

4. But never did a single
One of the Signs
Of their Lord reach them,
But they turned
Away therefrom.
5. And now they reject
The truth when it reaches
Them : but soon shall they
Learn the reality of what
They used to mock at.
6. See they not how many
Of those before them
We did destroy?—⁸³⁹
Generations We had established
On the earth, in strength
Such as We have not given
To you—for whom
We poured out rain
From the skies in abundance,
And gave (fertile) streams
Flowing beneath their (feet) :
Yet for their sins
We destroyed them,
And raised in their wake
Fresh generations
(To succeed them).
7. If We had sent
Unto thee a written
(Message) on parchment,^{839 A}
So that they could
Touch it with their hands,
The Unbelievers would
Have been sure to say :
"This is nothing but

۴- وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ
رَبِّهِمْ
إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ○

۵- فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ
فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَفْئُوتُهُمْ
مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ○

۶- أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
مِنْ قَبْلٍ مَنكُنْهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مَا لَهُمْ لِمَنكُنْهُمْ لَكُمْ
وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِزَازًا
وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَنْهَارَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ
فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ
يَذُوقُونَهُمْ
وَأَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ ○

۷- وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرْطَاسٍ
فَلْيَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ
لَقَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا

839. Now comes the argument from history, looking backwards and forwards. If we are so short-sighted or arrogant as to suppose that we are firmly established on this earth, secure in our privileges, we are reminded of much greater nations in the past, who failed in their duty and were wiped out. In their fate we must read our own fate, if we fail likewise! But those without faith, instead of facing facts squarely, "turn away therefrom."

839-A. *Qirās*, in the Apostle's life, could only mean "parchment," which was commonly used as writing material in Western Asia from the 2nd century B.C. The word was derived from the Greek, *Charles* (Cf. Latin, "*Charella*"). Paper, as we know it, made from rags, was first used by the Arabs after the conquest of Samarqand in 751 A.D. The Chinese had used it by the 2nd century B.C. The Arabs introduced it into Europe; it was used in Greece in the 11th or 12th century, and in Spain through Sicily in the 12th century. The Papyrus, made from an Egyptian reed, was used in Egypt as early as 2500 B.C. It gave place to Paper in Egypt in the 10th century.

Obvious magic ! " 840

8. They say : " Why is not
An angel sent down to him ? "
If We did send down
An angel, the matter
Would be settled at once,
And no respite
Would be granted them. 841

9. If We had made it
An angel, We should
Have sent him as a man,
And We should certainly
Have caused them confusion
In a matter which is
Already to them
Obscure and confused. 842

10. Mocked were (many)
Apostles before thee ;
But the scoffers
Were hemmed in
By the thing that they mocked. 843

SECTION 2.

11. Say : " Travel through the earth
And see what was the end
Of those who rejected Truth."
12. Say : " To whom belongeth
All that is in the heavens

سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ○

٨- وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ
وَلَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكَ
لَفُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ
ثُمَّ لَا يُنْظَرُونَ ○

٩- وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكَ
لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا
وَلَكَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ
مَا يَكْفُشُونَ ○

١٠- وَلَقَدْ اسْتَبْرَأْنَا بِرُسُلٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
فَخَافَ الْبَازِئِينَ سِخْرًا مِنْهُمْ
فَمَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَبْرِءُونَ ○

١١- قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ○
١٢- قُلْ لِمَن مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ

840. The materialists want to see actual physical material things before them, but if such a thing came from an unusual source or expressed things they cannot understand, they give it some name like magic, or superstition, or whatever name is in fashion, and they are not helped at all in attaining faith, because their " hearts are diseased " (ii. 10).

841. Cf. ii. 210. An angel is a heavenly being, a manifestation of God's glory, invisible to men who live gross material lives. Such men are given plenty of respite in which to turn in repentance to God and make themselves worthy of His light. But if their prayer to see an angel were granted, it would do them no good, for they would be destroyed as darkness is destroyed by light.

842. Supposing an angel should appear to their grosser senses, he could only do it in human form. In that case their present confused notions about spiritual life would be still more confounded. They would say : " We wanted to see an angel, and we have only seen a man ! "

843. " The scoffers were mocked by the thing that they mocked " would express epigrammatically part of the sense, but not the whole. " Hemmed in " implies that the logic of events turned the tables, and as a man might be besieged and surrounded by an enemy in war, and would be forced to surrender, so these mockers will find that events would justify Truth, not them. The mockers of Jesus,—where were they when Titus destroyed Jerusalem ? The mockers who drove out Muhammad from Mecca,—what was their plight when Muhammad came back in triumph and they sued for mercy,—and he gave it to them ! According to the Latin proverb, Great is Truth, and must prevail.

And on earth?" Say:

"To God. He hath inscribed
For Himself (the rule of) Mercy.⁸⁴⁴
That He will gather you
Together for the Day of Judgment,
There is no doubt whatever.
It is they who have lost
Their own souls, that will
Not believe.

13. "To Him belongeth all
That dwelleth (or lurketh) ⁸⁴⁵
In the Night and the Day.
For He is the One
Who heareth and knoweth
All things."⁸⁴⁶

14. Say: "Shall I take
For my protector
Any other than God,
The Maker of the heavens
And the earth?
And He it is that
Feedeth but is not fed."⁸⁴⁷
Say: "Nay! but I am
Commanded to be the first
Of those who bow
To God (in Islam),
And be not thou
Of the company of those
Who join gods with God."

وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ لِلَّهِ كَتَبَ
عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ
لِيَجْزِيَكُمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ
فِيهِ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ
فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ○

۱۳-وَلَهُ مَا سَكَنَ
فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ○

۱۴-قُلْ أَعَزَّ اللَّهُ اتَّخَذُ وَلِيًّا
فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَهُوَ يُطْعِمُهُ وَلَا يَطْعَمُهُ
قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ
مَنْ أَسْلَمَ
وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ○

844. History, travel, human experience, all prove the Mercy of God and the law that without it those who reject Truth tend to lose their own souls and destroy themselves.

845. *Sakana*—(1) to dwell; (2) to rest, to be still, to stop (moving), to lurk; (3) to be quiescent, as a letter which is not moved with a vowel.

If we imagine Night and Day to be places, and each to have (dwelling in them) things that are open and things that are concealed, things that move and things that are still, things that are sounded and things that are quiescent, we get some idea of the imagery implied. The mystery of Time (which seems more abstract than Space) is thus explained and illustrated by the idea of Place or Space, which also is a notion and not a concrete thing. But He Who has control of all these things is the one true God.

846. Throughout this section we have a sort of implied dialogue, of which one part is understood from the other part, which is expressed. In verse 11, we might have an imaginary objector saying: "Why go back to the past?" The answer is: "Well, travel through the world, and see whether it is not true that virtue and godliness exalt a nation, and the opposite are causes of ruin. Both the past and the present prove this." In verse 12 the objector may say: "But you speak of God's power?" The man of God replies: "Yes, but Mercy is God's own attribute, and knowledge and wisdom beyond what man can conceive."

847. *Feedeth but is not fed*: true both literally and figuratively. To God we owe the satisfaction of all needs, but He is independent of all needs.

15. Say : "I would, if I
Disobeyed my Lord,
Indeed have fear
Of the Penalty
Of a Mighty Day.

16. "On that day, if the Penalty
Is averted from any,
It is due to God's Mercy;
And that would be (Salvation),
The obvious fulfilment
Of all desire.⁸⁴⁸

17. "If God touch thee
With affliction, none
Can remove it but He;
If He touch thee with happiness,
He hath power over all things.⁸⁴⁹

18. "He is the Irresistible, (watching)
From above over His worshippers;
And He is the Wise,
Acquainted with all things."

19. Say : "What thing is most
Weighty in evidence?"
Say : "God is witness
Between me and you;
This Qurān hath been
Revealed to me by inspiration,
That I may warn you
And all whom it reaches.
Can ye possibly bear witness
That besides God there is
Another God?" Say :
"Nay! I cannot bear witness!"
Say : "But in truth
He is the One God,

١٥- قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
إِنْ عَصَيْتُ

رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

١٦- مَنْ يُصْرِفْ عَنْهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ

فَقَدْ رَحِمَهُ

وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ

١٧- وَإِنْ يَسْسَسْكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ

لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يَسْسَسْكَ بِخَيْرٍ

فَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

١٨- وَهُوَ الْغَالِيُ فَوقَ عِبَادِهِ

وَهُوَ السَّكِيمُ الْغَنِيُّ

١٩- قُلْ أَمَّا شَيْءٌ أَكْبَرُ شَهَادَةً

قُلْ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ

وَأُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ

لَا تُنذِرُكُمْ بِهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ أَشُدُّكُمْ

لَسْأَلُهُمْ أَنْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهَةٌ أُخْرَى

قُلْ لَا أَشْهَدُ

قُلْ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ

848. We continue the implied dialogue suggested in n. 846. In verse 14, the objector might say : "But we have other interests in life than religion and God." "No," says the man of God, "My Creator is the one and only Power whose protection I seek; and I strive to be first in the race." In verse 15, the objector suggests : "Enjoy the good things of this life; it is short." The answer is : "The Hereafter is more real to me, and promises the true fulfilment of all desire; happiness or affliction comes not from the fleeting pettinesses or illusions of this life, but from the power and wisdom of God." In verse 19, the objector makes his final splash : "What evidence is there for all this?" The reply is : "I know it is true, for God's voice is within me, and my living Teacher awakens that voice; and there is the Book of Inspiration, God is one, and there is none other besides."

849. The vulgar worship false gods out of fear that they would harm them or hope that they would confer some benefit on them. These false gods can do neither. All power, all goodness is in the hands of the One True God. All else is pretence or illusion.

And I truly am innocent
Of (your blasphemy of) joining
Others with Him."

20. The People of the Book
Know this as they know⁸⁵⁰
Their own sons.
Those who have lost
Their own souls
Refuse therefore to believe.

SECTION 3.

21. ~~Who~~ Who doth more wrong
Than he who inventeth
A lie against God
Or rejecteth His Signs?
But verily the wrong-doers
Never shall prosper.

22. One day shall We gather
Them all together: We
Shall say to those
Who ascribed partners (to Us):
"Where are the partners
Whom ye (invented
And) talked about?"

23. There will then be (left)
No subterfuge for them⁸⁵¹
But to say: "By God
Our Lord, we were not
Those who joined gods
With God."

24. Behold! how they lie
Against their own souls!

وَأَقْبَنِي بَرِيءٌ وَمِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ۝

۲۰-الَّذِينَ اتَّيْنَهُمُ الْكِتَابُ يَعْرِفُونَهُ
كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ آبَاءَهُمْ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝

۲۱-وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ
كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ
إِنَّهُ لَا يَفْقَهُ الظَّالِمُونَ ۝

۲۲-وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا
ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا
أَيْنَ شُرَكَاءُكُمْ
الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ۝

۲۳-ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِتْنَتُهُمْ
إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا وَاللَّهُ رَبُّنَا
مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ ۝

۲۴-أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ

850. Cf. ii. 146 and n. 151. In both passages the pronoun translated "this" may mean "him" and refer to Muḥammad the Apostle of God, as some Commentators think.

851. *Fitnat* has various meanings, from the root idea of "to try, to test, to tempt;" e.g. (1) a trial or temptation, as in ii. 102; (2) trouble, tumult, oppression, persecution, as in ii. 191, 193, 217; (3) discord, as in iii. 7; (4) subterfuge, an answer that amounts to a sedition, an excuse founded on a falsehood, as here. Other shades of meaning will be noticed as they occur.

Those who blasphemed God in imagining false gods will now see the vanity of their imaginations for themselves. What answer can they give now? In their perversity they will deny that they ever entertained the notion of false gods.

But the (lie) which they
Invented will leave them ⁸⁵²
In the lurch.

25. Of them there are some
Who (pretend to) listen to thee;
But We have thrown
Veils on their hearts,
So they understand it not, ^{852-A}
And deafness in their ears;
If they saw every one
Of the Signs, not they
Will believe in them;
In so much that
When they come to thee,
They (but) dispute with thee;
The Unbelievers say:
"These are nothing
But tales of the ancients."
26. Others they keep away from it,
And themselves they keep away;
But they only destroy
Their own souls,
And they perceived it not.
27. If thou couldst but see
When they are confronted
With the Fire!
They will say:
"Would that we were
But sent back!
Then would we not reject
The Signs of our Lord,
But would be amongst those
Who believe!"
28. Yea, in their own eyes
Will become manifest
What before they concealed.
But if they were returned,
They would certainly relapse
To the things they were forbidden,

وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ۝

٢٥- وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ
وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً
أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِيْ أَذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا
وَإِنْ يُرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ
لَّا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا
حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ
يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۝

٢٦- وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَيَنْتَوْنَ عَنْهُ
وَإِنْ يُهْلِكُونَ

إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۝

٢٧- وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَى النَّارِ
فَقَالُوا لَا بَيِّنَاتٌ لَّنَا
وَلَا مَكْدُوبٌ
يَا أَيُّهَا رَبَّنَا
وَلَوْ كُنَّا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

٢٨- بَلْ بَدَأَ لَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُخْفُونَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ

وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا لَّهُمْ عَنْهُ

852. The lies which they used to tell have now "wandered" from the channels which they used to occupy, and left the liars in the lurch. In denying the indubitable fact that they took false gods, they admit the falsity of their notions and thus are practically convicted out of their own mouths.

852-A. It = The Qur'an.

For they are indeed liars.⁸⁵³

29. And they (sometimes) say :

" There is nothing except
Our life on this earth,
And never shall we be
Raised up again."

30. If thou couldst but see

When they are confronted
With their Lord!

He will say :

" Is not this the truth ? "

They will say :

" Yea, by our Lord ! "

He will say :

" Taste ye then the Penalty,
Because ye rejected Faith."

وَالَهُمْ لَكِبُؤُنٌ ۝

٢٩- وَقَالُوا إِن هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا

وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ۝

٣٠- وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ

قَالُوا لَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ

قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّنَا

قَالَ قَدْ وَقَفُوا الْعَذَابَ

٤ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ۝

C. 77.—The life of this world is but empty :

(vi. 31-60). What is serious is the life hereafter.

The teacher of God's truth is not baulked

By frivolous objections or insults

Or persecution. The wicked will be

Cut off to the last remnant. God's wisdom

Pervades the whole of His creation,

And in His hands are the keys of the Unseen,

And the secrets of all that we see.

SECTION 4.

31. ~~The~~ Most indeed are they
Who treat it as a falsehood
That they must meet God,—
Until on a sudden
The hour is on them,
And they say : " Ah! woe
Unto us that we took
No thought of it ";
For they bear their burdens⁸⁵⁴
On their backs,

٣١- قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً

قَالُوا يَحْسِرُنَا عَلَىٰ مَا فَزَعْنَا فِيهَا

وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُونَ أَوْزَارَهُمْ عَلَىٰ

ظُهُورِهِمْ

853. Their falsity was not due to want of knowledge, but to perversity and selfishness. In their heart was a disease (ii. 10) : therefore neither their understanding, nor their ears, nor their eyes do their proper work. They twist what they see, hear, or are taught, and go deeper and deeper into the mire. The deceptions which they used to practise on other people will, before the Seat of Judgment, become clear in their own eyes.

854. Grievous is the burden of sins which the wicked will bear on their backs when they become conscious of them. Some Commentators personify Sins as ugly Demons riding on the backs of men, while the men's Good Deeds become the strong and patient mounts which will carry the men on their backs. If the Good Deeds are few and the Sins many, the man and his Good Deeds will be crushed under the load of the Evil which they carry.

And are they not evil,—
The burdens that they bear?

32. What is the life of this world
But play and amusement? ⁸⁵⁵
But best is the Home
In the Hereafter, for those
Who are righteous.
Will ye not understand?

33. We know indeed the grief
Which their words do cause thee:
It is not thee they reject:
It is the Signs of God,
Which the wicked contemn.

34. Rejected were the Apostles
Before thee: with patience
And constancy they bore
Their rejection and their wrongs,
Until Our aid did reach
Them: there is none
That can alter the Words
(And Decrees) of God.
Already hast thou received
Some account of those Apostles.

35. If their spurning is hard
On thy mind, and if
Thou wert able to seek
A tunnel in the ground
Or a ladder to the skies
And bring them a Sign,— ⁸⁵⁶
(What good?). If it were
God's Will, He could
Gather them together
Unto true guidance:

أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَزِيدُونَ ○

٣٢- وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لُحُوبٌ وَلَهُوَ
وَلِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا خَيْرٌ
لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ أَفْكَارًا تُعَقِّلُونَ ○

٣٣- قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزَنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ
فَأَنْتُمْ لَا يَكْذِبُونَكَ
وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بِلَايَةِ اللَّهِ يَسْتَحِدُّونَ ○

٣٤- وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبْتَ رَسُولٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
فَصَبَرُوا عَلَى مَا كَذَّبُوا
وَأَوْدُوا حَتَّى أَنهَم نَصْرًا
وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِنْ نَّبَايَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ○

٣٥- وَإِنْ كَانَ كِبْرُكَ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ
فَإِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَبْتَغِيَ نَفَقًا فِي
الْأَرْضِ أَوْ سُلَكًا فِي السَّمَاءِ
فَتَأْتِيَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ
وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهُدَى ○

855. Play and amusement are for preparing our minds for the serious things of life: in themselves they are not serious. So this life is a preparation for the Eternal Home to which we are going, which is far more important than the ephemeral pleasures which may possibly seduce us in this life.

856. There were many Signs of a divine mission in the Apostle's life and in the Message which he delivered. If these did not convince the Unbelievers, was it not vain to seek a miraculous Sign from the bowels of the earth or by a visible ascent to the skies? If in the Apostle's eagerness to get all to accept his Message, he was hurt at their callousness, active opposition, and persecution of him, he is told that a full knowledge of the working of God's Plan would convince him that impatience was misplaced. This was in the days of persecution before the Hijrat. The history in Medina and after shows how God's truth was ultimately and triumphantly vindicated. Who among the sincere devotees of Muhammad can fail to read vi. 33-35 without tears in his eyes?

So be not thou
Amongst those who are swayed
By ignorance (and impatience) !

36. Those who listen (in truth),⁸⁵⁷

Be sure, will accept :
As to the dead, God will
Raise them up; then will they
Be turned unto Him.

37. They say : " Why is not

A Sign sent down
To him from his Lord ? "
Say : " God hath certainly
Power to send down a Sign :
But most of them
Understand not." ⁸⁵⁸

38. There is not an animal
(That lives) on the earth,
Nor a being that flies
On its wings, but (forms
Part of) communities like you. ⁸⁵⁹
Nothing have we omitted
From the Book, and they (all)
Shall be gathered to their Lord
In the end.

39. Those who reject our Signs
Are deaf and dumb,— ⁸⁶⁰

فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ۝

۝۳۶- اِنَّكُمْ يَسْتَعْجِلُ الْاٰدِیْنَ یَسْمَعُوْنَ
وَالْمَوْتِیْ یَبْعَثُهُمُ اللّٰهُ
ثُمَّ اِلَيْهِ یَرْجَعُوْنَ ۝

۝۳۷- وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نَزَّلَ عَلَیْهِ اٰیَةٌ
مِّنْ رَّبِّهِ ۚ

قُلْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَادِرٌ عَلٰی اَنْ یُّنَزِّلَ اٰیَةً
وَلٰكِنْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا یَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝

۝۳۸- وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِی الْاَرْضِ
وَلَا طٰیْرِ یَطۡیِرُ بِجَنَاحِیْهِ
اِلَّا اَمَرۡنَا لَهَا
مَّا نَقَرۡطُنَا فِی السِّكِّیۡنِ مِنْ شَیْءٍ
ثُمَّ اِلٰی رَبِّهِمْ یُخْشَرُوْنَ ۝

۝۳۹- وَالَّذِیۡنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰیٰتِنَا صُمُّوْا وَبُكُّوْا

857. There is a double meaning here. (1) If people listen to truth sincerely and earnestly, they must believe; even if the spiritual faculty is dead, God will by His grace revive it and they will come to Him, if they really try earnestly to understand. (2) The sincere will believe; but those whose hearts are dead will not listen, yet they cannot escape being brought to the Judgment Seat before him.

858. Signs are all around them, but they do not understand. If they want a particular Sign to suit their gross ignorance, they will not be humoured, for they can always pick holes in anything that descends to their level.

859. "Animals living on the earth" include those living in the water,—fishes, reptiles, crustaceans, insects, as well as four-footed beasts. Life on the wing is separately mentioned. "Tair," which is ordinarily translated as "bird," is anything that flies, including mammals like bats. In our pride we may exclude animals from our purview, but they all live a life, social and individual, like ourselves, and all life is subject to the Plan and Will of God. In vi. 59 we are told that not a leaf falls but by His Will, and things dry and green are recorded in His Book. In other words they all obey His archetypal Plan, the Book which is also mentioned here. They are all answerable in their several degrees to His Plan ("shall be gathered to their Lord in the end"). This is not Pantheism: it is ascribing all life, activity, and existence to the Will and Plan of God.

860. The limited free-will of man makes a little difference. If he sees the Signs but shuts his ears to the true Message, and refuses (like a dumb thing) to speak out the Message which all Nature proclaims, then according to the Plan (of his limited free-will) he must suffer and wander, just as, in the opposite case, he will receive grace and salvation.

In the midst of darkness
 Profound : whom He willeth,
 He leaveth to wander :
 Whom He willeth, He placeth
 On the Way that is Straight.

40. Say : " Think ye to yourselves,
 If there come upon you
 The Wrath of God,
 Or the Hour (that ye dread),
 Would ye then call upon
 Other than God ?—
 (Reply) if ye are truthful !

41. " Nay,—On Him would ye
 Call, and if it be
 His Will, He would remove
 (The distress) which occasioned
 Your call upon Him,
 And ye would forget
 (The false gods) which ye
 Join with Him ! "

SECTION 5.

42. Before thee We sent
 (Apostles) to many nations,
 And We afflicted the nations
 With suffering and adversity,
 That they might learn humility.

43. When the suffering reached
 Them from Us, why then
 Did they not learn humility ?⁸⁶¹
 On the contrary their hearts
 Became hardened, and Satan
 Made their (sinful) acts
 Seem alluring to them.

44. But when they forgot
 The Message they had received,

فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ
 مَنْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ يُضِلَّهُ ۖ وَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
 يَجْعَلْهُ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۝

۴۰- قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ كُمْ
 إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ
 أَوْ أَتَاكُمْ السَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تُدْعُونَ
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۝

۴۱- بَلْ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ
 فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ
 إِنْ شَاءَ
 وَ تَنْسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ ۝

۴۲- وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَى أُمَمٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
 فَآخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَاءِ
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ ۝

۴۳- فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا
 تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ
 وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ
 مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝

۴۴- فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ

861. Sorrow and suffering may (if we take them rightly) turn out to be the best gifts of God to us. According to the Psalms (xciv. 12), "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord ! " Through suffering we learn humility, the antidote to many vices and the fountain of many virtues. But if we take them the wrong way, we grumble and complain ; we become faint-hearted ; and Satan gets his opportunity to exploit us by putting forward the alluring pleasures of his Vanity Fair.

We opened to them the gates
Of all (good) things,⁸⁶²
Until, in the midst
Of their enjoyment
Of our gifts,
On a sudden, We called
Them to account, when lo!
They were plunged in despair!

45. Of the wrong-doers the last
Remnant shall be cut off.
Praise be to God,
The Cherisher of the Worlds.⁸⁶³

46. Say: "Think ye, if God
Took away your hearing
And your sight, and sealed up⁸⁶⁴
Your hearts, who—a god
Other than God—could
Restore them to you?"
See how We explain
The Signs by various (symbols);
Yet they turn aside.

47. Say: "Think ye, if
The Punishment of God
Comes to you,
Whether suddenly or openly,⁸⁶⁵
Will any be destroyed
Except those who do wrong?"

48. We send the apostles
Only to give good news⁸⁶⁶

فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا
أَخَذْنَا لَهُمْ بَغْتَةً
فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ

٣٥- فَقَطَّعَ دَائِرَ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

٣٦- قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ
وَأَبْصَارَكُمْ وَخَتَمَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ
مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيَكُمْ بِهِ
أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ
ثُمَّ هُمْ يَصْذَقُونَ

٣٧- قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ
بَغْتَةً أَوْ جَهْرَةً
هَلْ يَهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

٣٨- وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ

862. Learning the inner truth of ourselves and the world presupposes a certain advanced stage of sensitiveness and spiritual development. There is a shallower stage, at which prosperity and the good things of life may teach us sympathy and goodness and cheerfulness like that of Mr. Cheerihyles in Dickens. In such cases the Message takes root. But there is another type of character which is puffed up in prosperity. For them prosperity is a trial or even a punishment from the higher point of view. They go deeper and deeper into sin, until they are pulled up of a sudden, and then, instead of being contrite they merely become desperate.

863. God's punishment of wrong-doers is a measure of justice, to protect the true and righteous from their depredations and maintain His righteous decrees. It is an aspect of His character which is emphasized by the epithet "Cherisher of the Worlds."

864. Cf. ii. 7 and n.

865. Suddenly=without warning. Openly=with many warnings, even to the sinners, though they heed them not. As to those who understand and read the signs of God, they could always tell that all wrong-doing must eventually have its punishment. But it will affect the wrong-doers, not the righteous. It is justice, not revenge.

866. The Apostles are not sent to cancel man's limited free-will. They are sent to preach and teach,—to preach hope to the repentant ("good news"), and to warn the rebellious of the Wrath to come.

And to warn : so those
Who believe and mend
(Their lives), — upon them
Shall be no fear,
Nor shall they grieve.

49. But those who reject
Our Signs, — them
Shall our punishment touch,
For that they ceased not
From transgressing.

50. Say : " I tell you not
That with me
Are the Treasures of God,⁸⁶⁷
Nor do I know
What is hidden,
Nor do I tell you I am
An angel. I but follow
What is revealed to me."
Say : " Can the blind
Be held equal to the seeing ? " ⁸⁶⁸
Will ye then consider not ?

SECTION 6.

51. Give the warning to those ⁸⁶⁹
In whose (hearts) is the fear
That they will be brought
(To Judgment) before their Lord :
Except for Him
They will have no protector
Nor intercessor :
That they may guard
(Against evil).

وَمُنذِرِينَ ۚ فَمَنْ أَمَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ
فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ۝

٣٩- وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
يَمَسُّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ۝

٥٠- قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ
اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبُ
وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ
إِنِّي أَنذِرُكُمْ إِلَّا مَا يُوْحَىٰ إِلَيَّ
قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ
أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ۝

٥١- وَأَنذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ
أَن يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُونِهِ
وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ
لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ۝

867. Literally, it might mean that the men of God are not like vulgar soothsayers, who pretend to reveal hidden treasures, or peer into the future, or claim to be something of a different nature from men. But the meaning is wider: they deal out God's great treasures of truth, but the treasures are not theirs, but God's; they have greater insight into the higher things, but that insight is not due to their own wisdom, but to God's inspiration; they are of the same flesh and blood with us, and the sublimity of their words and teaching arises through God's grace—to them and to those who hear them.

868. Therefore compare not the men of God ("the seeing") with ordinary men ("the blind"). The men of God, although they be but men, have the higher light with them; therefore do not exact of them petty ephemeral services. Though they are men, they are not as other men, and are entitled to reverence.

869. There are some men—sinners—who yet believe in Judgment; let them be warned of their personal responsibility to guard against evil; let them not rely upon protectors or intercessors before God; their sins can only be forgiven by God's own Mercy.

52. Send not away those
Who call on their Lord
Morning and evening,
Seeking His Face.⁸⁷⁰
Naught have they to gain
From thee, and naught
Hast thou to gain from them,⁸⁷¹
That thou shouldst turn
Them away, and thus be
(One) of the unjust.

53. Thus did We try
Some of them by comparison⁸⁷²
With others, that they
Should say: "Is it these
Then that God hath
Favoured from amongst us?"
Doth not God know best
Those who are grateful?

54. When those come to thee
Who believe in Our Signs,
Say: "Peace be on you:⁸⁷³
Your Lord hath inscribed
For Himself (the rule⁸⁷⁴
Of) Mercy: verily,
If any of you did evil
In ignorance, and thereafter

٥٢- وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ
بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ
مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

٥٣- وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ
لِيَقُولُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ
مِنْ بَيْنِنَا
الَّذِينَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِالشَّاكِرِينَ ○

٥٤- وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا
فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ
كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ
أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ

870. Face : *wajh* : see ii. 112 and n. 114. "Face" is used for God's Grace or Presence, the highest aim of spiritual aspiration.

871. Some of the rich and influential Quraish thought it beneath their dignity to listen to Muhammad's teaching in company with the lowly disciples, who were gathered round him. But he refused to send away these lowly disciples, who were sincere seekers after God. From a worldly point of view they had nothing to gain from Muhammad as he was himself poor, and he had nothing to gain from them as they had no influence. But that was no reason for turning them away; indeed their true sincerity entitled them to precedence over worldly men in the kingdom of God, whose justice was vindicated in Muhammad's daily life in this as in other things.

872. Pursue the argument of the last note. The influential people who were not given precedence over the poor and humble but sincere disciples, were on their trial as to their spiritual insight. Their temptation was to say (and they said it in scorn): "We are much greater than they: has God then selected these lowly people for His teaching?" But that was so. And God knew best those who were grateful to Him for His guidance.

873. The humble who had sincere faith, were not only not sent away to humour the wealthy: they were honoured, and were given a special salutation, which has become the characteristic salutation in Islam: "Peace be on you," —the word peace, "*salām*" having special affinity with the word "*Islām*." In words they are given the salutation; in life they are promised Mercy by the special grace of God.

874. Cf. vi. 12.

Repented, and amended
(His conduct), lo! He is
Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

55. Thus do We explain
The Signs in detail:
That the way of the sinners
May be shown up.⁸⁷⁵

SECTION 7,

56. Say: ⁸⁷⁶ "I am forbidden
To worship those—others
Than God—whom ye
Call upon." Say: "I will
Not follow your vain desires:
If I did, I would stray
From the path, and be not
Of the company of those
Who receive guidance."
57. Say: "For me, I have
An obvious Sign from my Lord,
But ye reject it. What ye ⁸⁷⁷
Would see hastened, is not
In my power. The Command
Rests with none but God:
He declares the Truth,
And He is the best of judges."
58. Say: "If what ye would see
Hastened were in my power,
The matter would be settled
At once between you and me."⁸⁷⁸

ثَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ
فَأَنَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ○

هـ- وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ
وَلِتَسْكُنَ سَبِيلَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ○

هـ- قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ
الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
قُلْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ أَهْوَاءُكُمْ
فَدَضَلْتُمْ إِذَا
وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ○

هـ- قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي
وَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِهِ مَا عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ
بِهِ إِنْ أَسْكَنْتُمْ إِلَّا إِلَهُهُ
يَقْضُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَاصِلِينَ ○

هـ- قُلْ لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ
بِهِ لَقَضَى الْأَمْرَ بَيْنَكُمْ

875. If the way of the sinners (in jealousy and worldly pride) is shown up, and details are given how to honour the truly sincere, it forms the best illustration of the teaching of God.

876. There are a number of arguments now put forward against the Meccans who refused to believe in God's Message. Each argument is introduced with the word "Say." Here are the first four: (1) I have received Light and will follow it; (2) I prefer my Light to your vain desires; (3) your challenge—"if there is a God, why does He not finish the blasphemers at once?"—it is not for me to take up; punishment rests with God; (4) if it rested with me, it would be for me to take up your challenge; all I know is that God is not unacquainted with the existence of folly and wickedness, and many other things besides, that no mortal can know; you can see little glimpses of His Plan, and you can be sure that He will not be tardy in calling you to account.

877. What ye would see hastened: what ye, deniers of God, are so impatient about; the punishment which ye mockingly say does not come to you. Cf. xiii. 6.

878. The Messenger of God is not here to settle scores with the wicked. It is not a matter between them and him. It is a matter between them and God; he is only a warner against sin, and a declarer of the gospel of salvation.

But God knoweth best
Those who do wrong."

59. With Him are the keys⁸⁷⁹
Of the Unseen, the treasures
That none knoweth but He.
He knoweth whatever there is
On the earth and in the sea.
Not a leaf doth fall
But with His knowledge:
There is not a grain
In the darkness (or depths)
Of the earth, nor anything
Fresh or dry (green or withered),
But is (inscribed) in a Record⁸⁸⁰
Clear (to those who can read).

60. It is He Who doth take
Your souls by night,
And hath knowledge of all
That ye have done by day
By day doth He raise
You up again; that a term
Appointed be fulfilled;
In the end unto Him
Will be your return;⁸⁸¹
Then will He show you
The truth of all
That ye did.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ○

٥٩- وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ
لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ
وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا
وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظِلَابٍ الْأَرْضِ
وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ
إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ○

٦٠- وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم بِالنَّهَارِ
ثُمَّ يَرْجِعْكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰ أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى
ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
ثُمَّ يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝

C. 78.—God's loving care doth encompass
(vi. 61-82.) Us round throughout life,
And deliver us from dangers
By land and sea. He is the only
Protector : how can we then

879. *Mafāhīl*: Plural of either *miftāḥ*—a key, or *maftāḥ*—a treasure. Both meanings are implied, and I have accordingly put both in my translation.

880. This is the mystic Record, the archetypal Plan, the Eternal Law, according to which everything seen and unseen is ordered and regulated. There is much mystic doctrine here, explained by beautiful metaphors and illustrations. The simplest things in Nature are subject to His Law. The fresh and the withered, the living and the lifeless—nothing is outside the Plan of His Creation.

881. As the rest of His Creation is subject to His Law and Plan, so is man's life in every particular and at every moment, awake or asleep. The mystery of Sleep—"the twin brother of death"—is called the taking of our soul by Him, with the record of all we have done in our waking moments, and this record sometimes appears to us in confused glimpses in dreams. By day we awaken again to our activities, and so it goes on until we fulfil the term of our life appointed for this earth. Then comes the other Sleep, (death), with the longer record of our Day (Life); and then, in the end comes the Resurrection and Judgment, at which we see everything clearly and not as in dreams, for that is the final Reality.

Forget Him or run after things
That are mere creatures of His,
And shall perish, while He
Is the Eternal God, adored
By Abraham and all the prophets ?

SECTION 8.

61. He is the Irresistible, (watching)
From above over His worshippers,
And He sets guardians⁸⁸²
Over you. At length,
When death approaches
One of you, Our angels⁸⁸³
Take his soul, and they
Never fail in their duty.

62. Then are men returned
Unto God, their Protector,
The (only) Reality :⁸⁸⁴
Is not His the Command ?
And He is the Swiftest
In taking account.

63. Say :⁸⁸⁵ " Who is it
That delivereth you
From the dark recesses⁸⁸⁶
Of land and sea,
When ye call upon Him
In meekness

٦١- وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ
وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ
تَوَكَّلْتُمْ عَلَيْنَا وَلَهُمْ لَا يَفْزُطُونَ ۝

٦٢- ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقُّ
إِلَّا لَهُ الْحُكْمُ
وَهُوَ أَسْرَعُ الْحَاسِبِينَ ۝

٦٣- قُلْ مَنْ يُنَجِّيكُمْ
مِّنْ ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ
تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا

882. *Guardians* : most Commentators understand this to mean Guardian-angels. The idea of guardianship is expressed in a general term. God watches over us and guards us, and provides all kinds of agencies, material, moral, and spiritual, to help our growth and development, keep us from harm, and bring us nearer to our Destiny.

883. *Angels* : the word used is *rusul*, the Sent Ones,—the same word as for human Apostles and Messengers sent by God to teach mankind. The agents who come to take our souls at death are accurate in the performance of their duty. They come neither before nor after their appointed time, nor do they do it in any manner other than that fixed by the Command of God.

884. *The only Reality* : *al-Haqq*, the Truth, the only True One. The point is that our illusions of the life of this lower world now vanish, when we are rendered back to God, from Whom we came. And now we find that so far from the results of our actions being delayed, they follow more swiftly than we can express in terms of Time. Here is the answer to the taunt of those who were impatient of the working of God's Plan (vi. 57-58).

885. In continuation of the four heads of argument referred to in n. 876, we have three more heads here in vi. 63-65 : (5) your calling upon Him in times of danger shows that in the depths of your hearts you feel His need ; (6) God's Providence saves you, and yet you ungratefully run after false gods ; (7) it is not only physical calamities that you have to fear ; your mutual discords and vengeance are even more destructive, and only faith in God can save you from them.

886. *Zulumat* : dark recesses, terrible lurking dangers, as in deserts or mountains, or forests, or seas.

And silent terror :⁸⁸⁷
 'If He only delivers us
 From these (dangers),
 (We vow) we shall truly
 Show our gratitude!'

64. Say : "It is God
 That delivereth you
 From these and all (other)
 Distresses : and yet
 Ye run after false gods!"

65. Say : "He hath power
 To send calamities⁸⁸⁸
 On you, from above
 And below, or to cover
 You with confusion
 In party strife,
 Giving you a taste
 Of mutual vengeance—
 Each from the other."
 See how We explain
 The Signs by various (symbols) ;⁸⁸⁹
 That they may understand.

66. But thy people reject
 This, though it is
 The Truth. Say : "Not mine
 Is the responsibility
 For arranging your affairs ;⁸⁹⁰

67. For every Message
 Is a limit of time,
 And soon shall ye
 Know it."

وَحُفْيَةً
 لِّئِنْ أُنْجِئْنَا مِنْ هَٰذَا
 لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ○

٦٣- قُلِ اللَّهُ يُنَجِّيكُمْ
 مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ
 ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ ○

٦٥- قُلِ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ
 أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ
 أَوْ يَلْبِسَكُمْ شِيْعًا وَيُلَاقِيَنَّكُمْ
 بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ
 الْأَيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَفْقَهُونَ ○

٦٦- وَكَذَّابٍ بِهِ قَوْمُكَ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ
 قُلْ لَنْسُتَ عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ○

٦٧- لِكُلِّ نَبَأٍ مَوْثِقَةٌ
 وَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ○

887. There are two readings, but they both ultimately yield the same meaning. (1) *Khufyatan*, silently, secretly, from the depth of your inner heart, suggesting unspeakable terror. (2) *Khifalan*, out of terror or fear or reverence, as in vii, 205.

888. *Calamities from above and below* : such as storms and blizzards, torrential rain, etc., or earthquakes, floods, landslides, etc.

889. Cf. vi. 46, where this refrain commences the argument now drawing to a close.

890. At the date of this revelation, the Apostle's people had as a body not only rejected God's truth, but were persecuting it. The Apostle's duty was to deliver his Message, which he did. He was not responsible for their conduct. But he told them plainly that all warnings from God had their time limit, as they would soon find out. And they did find out, within a very few years. For the leaders of the resistance came to an evil end, and their whole system of fraud and selfishness was destroyed, to make room for the purer Faith of Islam. Apart from that particular application, there is the more general application, for the present time and for all time.

68. ~~When~~ When thou seest men
Engaged in vain discourse
About Our Signs, turn
Away from them unless
They turn to a different⁸⁹¹
Theme. If Satan ever
Makes thee forget, then
After recollection, sit not
Thou in the company
Of the ungodly.

69. On their account
No responsibility
Falls on the righteous,⁸⁹²
But (their duty)
Is to remind them,
That they may (learn
To) fear God.

70. Leave alone those
Who take their religion
To be mere play
And amusement,⁸⁹³
And are deceived
By the life of this world.
But proclaim (to them)
This (truth) : that every soul
Delivers itself to ruin
By its own acts :⁸⁹⁴
It will find for itself
No protector or intercessor
Except God : if it offered
Every ransom, (or
Reparation), none
Will be accepted : such is
(The end of) those who
Deliver themselves to ruin
By their own acts :
They will have for drink
(Only) boiling water,

٦٨- وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ
فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا
فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۚ وَإِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ
الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تَقْعُدَ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِ
مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

٦٩- وَمَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنْ
جَسَادِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
وَلَكِنْ ذَكِّرُوا
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ○

٧٠- وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ
اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لُعْبًا وَلَهْوًا
وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا
وَذَكِّرْ بِهِ أَن تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا
كَسَبَتْ ۚ
لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ ۚ
وَإِنْ تَعْدِلْ كُلُّ عَدْلٍ لَا يُؤْخَذَ
مِنْهَا ۚ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أُبْسِلُوا بِمَا كَسَبُوا
لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ

891. Cf. iv. 140. If in any gathering truth is ridiculed, we must not sit in such company. If we find ourselves in it, as soon as we realise it, we must show our disapproval by leaving.

892. "Evil to him who evil thinks," or evil does. Every man is responsible for his own conduct. But the righteous have two duties : (1) to protect themselves from infection, and (2) to proclaim God's truth, for even in the most unlikely circumstances, it is possible that it may have some effect.

893. Cf. vi. 32, where we are told that the life of this world is mere play and amusement, and Religion and the Hereafter are the serious things that require our attention. Worldly people reverse this, because they are deceived by the allurements of this life. But their own acts will find them out.

894. We must never forget our own personal responsibility for all we do, or deceive ourselves by the illusion of vicarious atonement.

And for punishment,
One most grievous :
For they persisted
In rejecting God.

SECTION 9.

71. Say : ⁸⁹⁵ " Shall we indeed
Call on others besides God,—
Things that can do us
Neither good nor harm,—
And turn on our heels
After receiving guidance
From God ?—like one
Whom the evil ones
Have made into a fool,
Wandering bewildered
Through the earth, his friends
Calling 'Come to us',
(Vainly) guiding him to the Path."

Say : " God's guidance
Is the (only) guidance,
And we have been directed
To submit ourselves
To the Lord of the worlds ;—

72. "To establish regular prayers
And to fear God :
For it is to Him
That we shall be
Gathered together."

73. It is He Who created
The heavens and the earth
In true (proportions) : ⁸⁹⁶
The day He saith, "Be,"

وَعَذَابُ الْيَوْمِ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ۝

۱- قُلْ أَنَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنَا
وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا
وَنُكْرِهُ عَلَىٰ أَغْقَابِنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَىٰ اللَّهُ
كَالَّذِي اسْتَمْتَوْهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فِي
الْأَرْضِ خَذِرًا ۚ
لَهُ أَصْحَابٌ يَدْعُونَهُ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ ائْتِنَا
قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ
هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ
وَأَمْرُنَا لِبِسْلِمٍ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

۲- وَأَنْ أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَاتَّقُوا ۚ
وَهُوَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُخْشَرُونَ ۝

۳- وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
بِالْحَقِّ ۚ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ۚ

895. In continuation of the seven heads of argument referred to in nn. 876 and 885, we have here the final two heads: (8) who would, after receiving guidance from the living, eternal God, turn to lifeless idols? To do so would indeed show that we were made into fools, wandering to a precipice; (9) therefore accept the only true guidance, the guidance of God, and obey His Law, for we shall have to answer before His judgment-seat.

896. The argument mounts up here, leading to the great insight of Abraham the true in faith, who did not stop short at the wonders of nature, but penetrated "from nature up to nature's God." God not only created the heavens and the earth: with every increase of knowledge we see in what true and perfect proportions all Creation is held together. Creatures are subject to Time, but the Creator is not: His word is the key that opens the door of existence. It is not only the starting point of existence, but the whole measure and standard of Truth and Right. There may possibly be, to our sight in this great world, aberrations of human or other wills, but the moment the trumpet sounds for the last day, His judgment-seat will, with perfect justice, restore the dominion of Right and Reality. For His knowledge and wisdom cover all reality.

Behold! it is. His Word
Is the Truth. His will be
The dominion the day
The trumpet will be blown.
He knoweth what ye
Keep secret and what ye
Make known. For He
Is the Wise, well acquainted
(With all things).

74. **إِذَا**! Abraham said
To his father Āzar:
"Takest thou idols for gods?
For I see thee
And thy people
In manifest error."

75. So also did We show⁸⁹⁷
Abraham the power
And the laws of the heavens
And the earth, that he
Might (with understanding)
Have certitude.

76. When the night
Covered him over,
He saw a star:
He said: "This is my Lord."
But when it set,
He said: "I love not
Those who set."⁸⁹⁸

77. When he saw the moon
Rising in splendour,
He said: "This is my Lord."
But when the moon set,

قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ
وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ
يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ
عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ○

٧٤- وَإِذَا قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ أَزَرَ
أَتَتَّخِذُ أَصْنَامًا مِثْلِي
إِنِّي أَرَأَيْتَكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ○

٧٥- وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي
إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَلِيَكُونِ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ ○

٧٦- فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ
رَأَى نَوْجًا
قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي
فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ الْإِفْلِينَ ○

٧٧- فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ بَازِعًا
قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلََمَّا أَفَلَ

897. Now comes the story of Abraham. He lived among the Chaldeans, who had great knowledge of the stars and heavenly bodies. But he got beyond that physical world and saw the spiritual world behind. His ancestral idols meant nothing to him. That was the first step. But God took him many degrees higher. God showed him with certitude the spiritual glories behind the magnificent powers and laws of the physical universe.

898. This allegory shows the stages of Abraham's spiritual enlightenment. It should not be supposed that he literally worshipped stars or heavenly bodies. Having seen through the folly of ancestral idol worship, he began to see the futility of worshipping distant beautiful things that shine, which the vulgar endue with a power which does not reside in them. A type of such is a star shining in the darkness of the night. Superstition might read fortunes in it, but truer knowledge shows that it rises and sets according to laws whose author is God. And its light is extinguished in the broader light of day. Its worship is therefore futile. It is not a Power, much less the Supreme Power.

He said : " Unless my Lord
Guide me, I shall surely
Be among those
Who go astray." ⁸⁹⁹

78. When he saw the sun
Rising in splendour,
He said : " This is my Lord ;
This is the greatest (of all). "
But when the sun set,
He said : " Oh my people !
I am (now) free
From your (guilt)
Of giving partners to God. ⁹⁰⁰

79. " For me, I have set
My face, firmly and truly,
Towards Him Who created
The heavens and the earth,
And never shall I give
Partners to God."

80. His people disputed ⁹⁰¹
With him. He said :
" (Come) ye to dispute
With me, about God,
When He (Himself)
Hath guided me ?
I fear not (the beings)
Ye associate with God :

قَالَ لَئِنْ لَمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي
لَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ ٥

٨٠- فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسُ بَارِعَةً
قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي
هَذَا أَكْبَرُ
فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ

قَالَ يَقُولُونَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ٥
٨٩- إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلذِّينِ
فُطِّرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا
وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ٥

٨٠- وَحَاجَّةَ قَوْمِهِ
قَالَ أَنَحْجُجُوْنِي فِي اللَّهِ
وَقَدْ هَدَانِ
وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهٖ

899. Continuing the allegory, the moon, though she looks bigger and brighter than the star, turns out on closer knowledge, not only to set like the star, but to change her shape from hour to hour, and even to depend for her light on some other body ! How deceptive are appearances ! That is not God ! At that stage you begin to search for something more reliable than appearances to the eye in the darkness of the night. You ask for guidance from God.

900. The next stage in the allegory is the sun. You are in the open light of Day. Now you have the right clue. You see the biggest object in the heavens. But is it the biggest ? There are thousands of stars in the universe bigger than the sun. And every day the sun appears and disappears from your sight. Such is not the God who created you and all these wonderful works of His. What folly to worship creatures, when we might turn to the true God ? Let us abjure all these follies and proclaim one true God.

901. To continue Abraham's allegory : if spiritual enlightenment go so far as to take a man beyond his ancestral worship, people will come to dispute with him. They will frighten him with the dire consequences of his dissent. What does he care ? He has found the truth. He is free from superstitious fears, for has he not found the true God, without Whose Will nothing can happen ? On the contrary he knows that it is the godless who have just grounds for fear. And he offers admonition to them, and arguments that should bring them the clearness of truth instead of the vagueness and mystery of superstition,—the security of Faith instead of the haunting fear of those who have no clear guidance.

Unless my Lord willeth,
(Nothing can happen).
My Lord comprehendeth
In His knowledge all things.
Will ye not (yourselves)
Be admonished ?

81. "How should I fear
(The beings) ye associate
With God, when ye
Fear not to give partners
To God without any warrant
Having been given to you ?
Which of (us) two parties
Hath more right to security ?
(Tell me) if ye know.

82. "It is those who believe
And confuse not their beliefs
With wrong—that are
(Truly) in security, for they
Are on (right) guidance."

C. 79. — The good men and true, who succeeded
(vi. 83-110) Abraham, received the gifts
Of revelation and guidance, and kept
Alive God's Message, which now
Is proclaimed in the Qurān,
In which is blessing and confirmation
Of all that went before. In the daily
Pageants of Nature,— the dawn
And the restful night, the sun,
The moon, the stars that guide
The mariner in distant seas,
The rain clouds pouring abundance,
And the fruits that delight the heart
Of man—can ye not read
Signs of God ? No vision can
Comprehend Him, yet He
Knoweth and comprehendeth all.

SECTION 10.

83. What was the reasoning
About Us, which
We gave to Abraham
(To use) against his people :⁴⁰²

إِلَّا أَنْ يُفَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا
وَبِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا
أَفَلَا تَعْتَدُونَ ٥

۸۱- وَكَيْفَ أَخَانُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ
وَلَا تَخْفَوْنَ أَشْرَكْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ
مَا لَمْ يُنْزَلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا
فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ٥

۸۲- الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ
بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ٥

۸۳- وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى
قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَّشَاءُ ٥

902. The spiritual education of Abraham raised him many degrees above his contemporaries, and he was expected to use that knowledge and dignity for preaching the truth among his own people.

We raise whom We will,
Degree after degree:
For thy Lord is full
Of wisdom and knowledge.

84. We gave him Isaac
And Jacob: all (three)
We guided: ⁹⁰³
And before him,
We guided Noah, ⁹⁰⁴
And among his progeny,
David, Solomon, Job,
Joseph, Moses, and Aaron:
Thus do We reward
Those who do good:

85. And Zakariya and John, ⁹⁰⁵
And Jesus and Elias:
All in the ranks
Of the Righteous:

86. And Isma'il and Elisha, ⁹⁰⁶
And Jonas, and Lot:

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝

۸۴- وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ
وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ
وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۝

۸۵- وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِلْيَاسَ
كُلٌّ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝

۸۶- وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيُوسُفَ وَنُوحًا

903. We have now a list of eighteen Apostles in four groups, covering the great Teachers accepted among the three great religions based on Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. The first group to be mentioned is that of Abraham, his son Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob. Abraham was the first to have a Book. His Book is mentioned in Q. lxxxvii. 19, though it is now lost. They were therefore the first to receive Guidance in the sense of a Book.

904. In the second group, we have the great founders of families, apart from Abraham, viz., Noah, of the time of the Flood; David and Solomon, the real establishers of the Jewish monarchy; Job, who lived 140 years, saw four generations of descendants, and was blessed at the end of his life with large pastoral wealth (Job xlii. 16, 12); Joseph, who as Minister of State did great things in Egypt and was the progenitor of two Tribes; and Moses and Aaron, the leaders of the Exodus from Egypt. They led active lives and are called "doers of good."

905. The third group consists not of men of action, but Preachers of Truth, who led solitary lives. Their epithet is: "the Righteous." They were mystic prophets and form a connected group round Jesus. Zakariya was the father of John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus (iii. 37-41); and Jesus referred to John the Baptist as Elias: "this is Elias, which was for to come" (Matt. xi. 14); and Elias is said to have been present and talked to Jesus at the Transfiguration on the Mount Matt. xvii. 3). Elias is the same as Elijah.

906. This is the last group, described as those "favoured above the nations." It consists of four men who had all great misfortunes to contend with, and were concerned in the clash of nations, but they kept in the path of God, and came through above the clash of nations. Isma'il was the eldest son of Abraham; when he was a baby, he and his mother had nearly died of thirst in the desert round Mecca; but they were saved by the well of Zamzam, and he became the founder of the new Arab nation. Elisha (Al-Yasa') succeeded to the mantle of the Prophet Elijah (same as Elias, see last note); he lived in troublous times for both the Jewish kingdoms (of Judah and Israel); there were wicked kings, and other nations were pressing in on them; but he performed many miracles, and some check was given to the enemies under his advice. The story of Jonas (Yānus) is well-known: he was swallowed by a fish or whale, but was saved by God's mercy: through his preaching, his city (Nineveh) was saved (x. 98). Lot was a contemporary and nephew of Abraham: when the city of Sodom was destroyed for its wickedness, he was saved as a just man (vii. 80-84).

And to all We gave
Favour above the nations :

87. (To them) and to their fathers,⁹⁰⁷
And progeny and brethren :
We chose them,
And We guided them
To a straight Way.

88. This is the Guidance
Of God: He giveth
That guidance to whom
He pleaseth, of His worshippers.
If they were to join
Other gods with Him,
All that they did
Would be vain for them.

89. These were the men
To whom We gave
The Book, and Authority,
And Prophethood: if these
(Their descendants) reject them,⁹⁰⁸
Behold ! We shall entrust
Their charge to a new People
Who reject them not.

90. Those were the (prophets)
Who received God's guidance :
Copy the guidance they received ;
Say: "No reward for this
Do I ask of you :
This is no less than
A Message for the nations."

SECTION 11.

91. Do just estimate of God⁹⁰⁹
Do they make when they say:

وَكَلَّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

۸۷- وَمِنَ آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَأَخْوَالِهِمْ
وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ وَهْدًا يَنْهَدُهُمْ
إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۝

۸۸- ذَلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ
وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحَبِطَ عَنْهُمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝

۸۹- أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَ
الْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ
وَأَن يَكْفُرُوا بِهَا هُوَ ظُلْمٌ وَقَدْ كُنَّا بِهَا
قَوْمًا لَّيْسُوا بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ ۝

۹۰- أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ
فَبِعَدَّتِهِمُ اقْتَدِ
قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا
إِن هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ۝

۹۱- وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ قَالُوا

907. I take verse 87 to refer back to all the four groups just mentioned.

908. *Them*, i.e., the Book, and Authority and Prophethood. They were taken away from the other People of the Book and entrusted to the holy Apostle Muhammad and his People.

909. *Qadara*: to weigh, judge, or estimate the value or capacity of anything; to have power so to do. Cf. *Qadr* in iv. 149 and n. 635. The Jews who denied the inspiration of Muhammad had a good answer in their own books about the inspiration of Moses. To those who do not believe in Moses, the answer is more general: is it a just estimate of God to think either that He has not the power or the will to guide mankind, seeing that He is Omnipotent and the Source of all good? If you say that guidance comes, not through an inspired book or man, but through our general intelligence, we point to the spiritual ignorance of "you and your ancestors," the sad spiritual darkness of men and nations high in the intellectual scale.

"Nothing doth God send down
To man (by way of revelation)" :
Say : "Who then sent down
The Book which Moses brought ?—
A light and guidance to man : ⁹¹⁰
But ye make it into
(Separate) sheets for show, ⁹¹¹
While ye conceal much
(Of its contents) : therein
Were ye taught that
Which ye knew not—
Neither ye nor your fathers."
Say : "God (sent it down)" :
Then leave them to plunge
In vain discourse and trifling.

92. And this is a Book
Which We have revealed,
Bringing blessings, ⁹¹² and
confirming
(The revelations) which came
Before it : that thou
Mayest warn the Mother ⁹¹³
Of Cities and all around her.
Those who believe
In the Hereafter
Believe in this (Book),
And they are constant
In guarding their Prayers. ⁹¹⁴

93. ~~Who~~ Who can be more wicked
Than one who inventeth

مَا أُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ سَيِّئٍ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
قُلْ مَنْ أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ الَّذِي جَاءَ بِهِ
مُوسَىٰ نُورًا وَهُدًى لِلنَّاسِ
يَجْعَلُونَهُ قَرَاطِيسَ تُبْدُونَهَا
وَتُخْفُونَ كَثِيرًا
وَاعْلَمْتُمْ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنْتُمْ وَلَا
آبَاؤُكُمْ قُلْ اللَّهُ
تَعْلَمُ دُرُّهُم فِي خُوضِهِمْ وَلَعَلَّوْنَ
٩٢- وَهَذَا الْكِتَابُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِيكَ مُصَدِّقًا
الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ
وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا
وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ
وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ
٩٣- وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ

910. Cf. v. 47 and n. 750, and v. 49. In those passages Guidance (in practical conduct) is put before Light (or spiritual insight), as they refer to ordinary or average men. Here Light (or spiritual insight) is put first as the question is: does God send inspiration?

911. The Message to Moses had unity: it was one Book. The present Old Testament is a collection of odd books ("sheets") of various kinds: see Appendix II, end of S. v. In this way you can make a show, but there is no unity, and much of the spirit of the original is lost or concealed or overlaid. The same applies to the New Testament: see Appendix III, after Appendix II.

912. *Mubārak*: blessed, as having received God's blessing; bringer of blessings to others, as having been blessed by God. God's highest blessing is the Guidance and Light which the Book brings to us, and which brings us nearer to Him.

913. *Mother of Cities*: Mecca, now the Qibla and Centre of Islam. If this verse was (like the greater part of the Chapter) revealed in Mecca before the Hijrat, and before Mecca was made the Qibla of Islam, Mecca was nonetheless the Mother of Cities, being traditionally associated with Abraham and with Adam and Eve (see ii. 125, and n. 217 to ii. 197).

All round Mecca: would mean, the whole world if we look upon Mecca as the Centre.

914. An earnest study of the Qurān is true worship; so is Prayer, and so are all deeds of goodness and charity.

A lie against God,
Or saith, "I have
Received inspiration,"
When he hath received
None, or (again) who saith,
"I can reveal the like
Of what God hath revealed"?
If thou couldst but see
How the wicked (do fare)
In the flood of confusion
At death!—the angels
Stretch forth their hands,
(Saying), "Yield up your souls : ⁹¹⁵
This day shall ye receive
Your reward,—a penalty
Of shame, for that ye used
To tell lies against God,
And scornfully to reject
Of His Signs!"

94. "And behold! ye come
To Us bare and alone
As We created you
For the first time: ⁹¹⁶
Ye have left behind you
All (the favours) which
We bestowed on you:
We see not with you
Your intercessors
Whom ye thought to be
Partners in your affairs:
So now all relations
Between you have been
Cut off, and your (pet) fancies
Have left you in the lurch!" ⁹¹⁷

اَفْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا اَوْ قَالَ اُنْجِى اِلَى
وَلَمْ يَزَلْ اِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ
وَمَنْ قَالَ سَاَنْزِلُ وَمِثْلَ مَا اَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
وَلَوْ تَرَى اِذَ الظَّالِمُونَ
فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ
وَالنَّارِ كَيْفَ يَاسْطَوْنَ اَيْدِيَهُمْ
اُخْرِجُوا اَنْفُسَكُمْ
الْيَوْمَ يُخْرَجُونَ عَدَابَ الْهُونِ
يَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ
وَكُنْتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ٩٤

٩٤. وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَاهُمْ قُرَادَى
كَمَا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ
وَنَزَّلْنَاهُمْ مِمَّا خَوَّلْنَاهُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ
وَمَا نَرَى مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَ الَّذِينَ
رَعَيْنَاهُمْ اِنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءُ
لَقَدْ نَقَطَ بَيْنَكُمْ
وَضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ٩٥

915. *Yield up your souls* : or "get your souls to come out of your bodies." The wicked, we may suppose, are not anxious to part with the material existence in their bodies for the "reward" which in irony is stated to be there to welcome them.

916. Some of the various ideas connected with "creation" are noted in n. 120 to ii. 117. In the creation of man there are various processes. If his body was created out of clay, i. e., earthy matter, there was an earlier process of the creation of such earthy matter. Here the body is left behind, and the soul is being addressed. The soul underwent various processes of fashioning and adapting to its various functions in its various surroundings (xxxii. 7-9). But each individual soul, after release from the body, comes back as it was created, with nothing more than its history, "the deeds which it has earned," which are really a part of it. Any exterior things given to help in its development, "the favours which we bestowed on you," it must necessarily leave behind, however it may have been proud of them. These exterior things may be material things, e. g., wealth, property, signs of power, influence and pride such as sons, relatives, and friends, etc., or they may be intangible things, like talents, intellect, social gifts, etc.

917. The false ideas of intercessors, demi-gods, gods, saviours, etc., now vanish like unsubstantial visions, "leaving not a wrack behind." Now the soul is face to face with reality. Its personal responsibility is brought home to it.

SECTION 12.

95. It is God Who causeth ⁹¹⁸
 The seed-grain
 And the date-stone
 To split and sprout. ⁹¹⁹
 He causeth the living
 To issue from the dead,
 And He is the One
 To cause the dead
 To issue from the living. ⁹²⁰
 That is God : then how
 Are ye deluded
 Away from the truth ?

٩٥- إِنْ اللَّهَ فَالْقَى الْحَيِّ وَالْمَوْتِ
 يُخْرِجُ الْحَيِّ
 مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ
 وَ يُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتِ
 مِنَ الْحَيِّ
 ذَلِكَمُ اللَّهُ فَأَيُّ الْفَوَكُونَ ○

918. Another beautiful nature passage, referring to God's wonderful artistry in His Creation. In how few and how simple words, the whole pageant of Creation is placed before us ! Beginning from our humble animal needs and dependence on the vegetable world, we are asked to contemplate the interaction of the living and the dead. Here is mystic teaching, referring not only to physical life but to the higher life above the physical plane,—not only to individual life but to the collective life of nations. Then we take a peep into the daily miracle of morning, noon, and night, and pass on to the stars that guide the distant mariner. We rise still higher to the mystery of the countless individuals from the one human soul,—their sojourn and their destiny. So we get back to the heavens : the description of the luscious fruits which the "gentle rain from heaven" produces, leaves us to contemplate the spiritual fruits which faith will provide for us, with the aid of the showers of God's mercy.

919. The seed-grain and the date-stone are selected as types in the vegetable kingdom, showing how our physical life depends on it. The fruits mentioned later (in vi. 99) start another allegory which we shall notice later. Botanists will notice that the seed-grain includes the cereals (such as wheat, barley, rice, millet, etc.) which are monocotyledons, as well as the pulses (such as beans, peas, gram, etc.) and other seeds which are dicotyledons. These two represent the most important classes of food-grains, while the date-palm, a monocotyledon, represents for Arabia both food, fruit, confectionery, thatch and pillars for houses, shady groves in oases, and a standard measure of wealth and well-being. "*Split and sprout*": both ideas are included in the root *falaqa*, and a third is expressed by the word "cleave" in the next verse, for the action of evolving day-break from the dark. I might almost have used the word "churn," familiar to students of Hindu lore in the Hindu allegory of the "churning of the ocean." For vegetables, "split and sprout" represents a double process : (1) the seed divides, and (2) one part shoots up, seeking the light, and forming leaves and the visible parts of the future tree, and the other part digs down into the dark, forming the roots and seeking just that sustenance from the soil, which is adapted for the particular plant. This is just one small instance of the "judgment and ordering" of God, referred to in the next verse.

920. This does not mean that in physical nature there are no limits between life and non-life, between the organic and the non-organic. In fact physicists are baffled at the barrier between them and frankly confess that they cannot solve the mystery of Life. If there is such a barrier in physical nature, is it not all the more wonderful that God can create Life out of nothing ? He has but to say, "Be," and it is. He can bring Life from non-Life and annihilate Life. But there are two other senses in which we can contemplate the contrast between the living and the dead. (1) We have just been speaking of the botanical world. Take it as a whole, and see the contrast between the winter of death, the spring of revivification, the summer of growth, and the autumn of decay, leading back to the death of winter. Here is a cycle of living from dead, and dead from living. (2) Take our spiritual life, individual or collective. We rise from the darkness of spiritual nothingness to the light of spiritual life. And if we do not follow the spiritual laws, God will take away that life and we shall be again as dead. We may die many deaths. The keys of life and death are in God's hands. Neither Life nor Death are fortuitous things. Behind them both is the Cause of Causes,—and only He.

96. He it is that cleaveth
The day-break (from the dark):
He makes the night
For rest and tranquillity,
And the sun and moon
For the reckoning (of time):
Such is the judgment⁹²¹
And ordering of (Him),
The Exalted in Power,
The Omniscient.

٩٦- قَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ
وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا
وَالشَّمْسَ
وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا
ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ
الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

97. It is He Who maketh
The stars (as beacons) for you,
That ye may guide yourselves,
With their help,
Through the dark spaces
Of land and sea:⁹²²
We detail Our Signs
For people who know.

٩٧- وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ
لِيَهْتَدُوا بِهَا
فِي ظُلُمَاتِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
قَدْ فَضَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ
لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

98. It is He Who hath
Produced you⁹²³
From a single person:
Here is a place of sojourn
And a place of departure:⁹²⁴
We detail Our signs
For people who understand.

٩٨- وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ
مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ
فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ
قَدْ فَضَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُفْقَهُونَ

921. The night, the day, the sun, the moon,—the great astronomical universe of God. How far, and yet how near to us! God's universe is boundless, and we can barely comprehend even its relations to us. But this last we must try to do if we want to be numbered with "the people who know." *Taqdir*: ('f. vi. 91 and n. 909, and iv. 149 and n. 655.

922. See the last note. At sea, or in deserts or forests, or "in fairy scenes forlorn,"—whenever we sweep over wide spaces, it is the stars that act as our guides, just as the sun and moon have already been mentioned as our measures of time.

923. *Produced*: *ansha-a*=made you grow, increase, develop, reach maturity: another of the processes of creation. This supplements n. 120 to ii. 117 and n. 916 to vi. 94. It is one of the wonders of God's Creation, that from one person we have grown to be so many, and each individual has so many faculties and capacities, and yet we are all one. In the next verse we have the allegory of grapes and other fruits: all grapes may be similar to look at, yet each variety has a distinctive flavour and other distinctive qualities, and each individual grape may have its own special qualities. So for man.

924. In the sojourn of this life we must respond to God's hand in fashioning us, by making full use of all our faculties, and we must get ready for our departure into the Life that will be eternal.

99. It is He Who sendeth down
 Rain from the skies: ⁹²⁵
 With it We produce
 Vegetation of all kinds:
 From some We produce
 Green (crops), out of which
 We produce grain,
 Heaped up (at harvest);
 Out of the date-palm
 And its sheaths (or spathes)
 (Come) clusters of dates
 Hanging low and near:
 And (then there are) gardens
 Of grapes, and olives,
 And pomegranates,
 Each similar (in kind)
 Yet different (in variety): ⁹²⁶
 When they begin to bear fruit,
 Feast your eyes with the fruit
 And the ripeness thereof. ⁹²⁷
 Behold! in these things
 There are Signs for people
 Who believe. ⁹²⁸

٩٩- وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
 فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا
 نُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا
 وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنْ طَلْعِهَا
 قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ
 وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ
 وَالزَّيْتُونِ وَالرَّيْحَانِ مُمْتَلِئًا
 مُخْتَلِفًا أَمْثَلِئًا
 أَنْظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ
 إِذَا أَشْتَرَىٰ وَيَنْجِيهِ
 إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّةً
 لِّأُولِي الْقُلُوبِ يُؤْمِنُونَ ○

925. Our allegory now brings us to maturity, the fruit, the harvest, the vintage. Through the seed we came up from nothingness to life; we lived our daily life of rest and work and passed the mile-stones of time; we had the spiritual experience of traversing through vast spaces in the spiritual world, guiding our course through the star of Faith; we grew; and now for the harvest or the vintage! How satisfied the grower must be when the golden grain is harvested in heaps or the vintage gathered! So will man if he has produced the fruits of Faith!

926. Each fruit—whether it is grapes, or olives, or pomegranates,—looks alike in its species, and yet each variety may be different in flavour, consistency, shape, size, colour, juice or oil contents, proportion of seed to fruit, etc. In each variety individuals may be different. Apply the allegory to man, whose varied spiritual fruit may be equally different and yet equally valuable!

927. And so we finish this wonderful allegory. Search through the world's literature, and see if you can find another such song or hymn,—so fruity in its literary flavour, so profound in its spiritual meaning!

928. There is a refrain in this song, which is subtly varied. In verse 97 it is: "We detail our Signs for people who *know*." So far we were speaking of the things we see around us every day. Knowledge is the appropriate instrument for these things. In verse 98 we read: "We detail Our Signs for people who *understand*." Understanding is a higher faculty than knowledge, and is necessary for seeing the mystery and meaning of this life. At the end of verse 99 we have: "In these things there are Signs for people who *believe*." Here we are speaking of the real fruits of spiritual Life. For them Faith is necessary, as bringing us nearer to God.

100. Yet they make
The Jinns equals⁹²⁹
With God, though God
Did create the Jinns;
And they falsely,
Having no knowledge,
Attribute to Him
Sons and daughters.
Praise and glory be
To Him! (for He is) above
What they attribute to Him!

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ
وَخَلَقَهُمْ
وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ
وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
سُبْحَانَ
وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ ١٠٠

١٠٠

SECTION 13.

101. No Him is due
The primal origin
Of the heavens and the earth:⁹³⁰
How can He have a son
When He hath no consort?
He created all things,
And He hath full knowledge
Of all things.

بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
أَلَيْ يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ
وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ
وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ
وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ١٠١

102. That is God, your Lord!
There is no god but He,
The Creator of all things:
Then worship ye Him:
And He hath power
To dispose of all affairs.

ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ
وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ١٠٢
لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْبَصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ

103. No vision can grasp Him,
But His grasp is over

929. *Jinns*: who are they? In xviii. 50 we are told that Iblis was one of the Jinns, and it is suggested that that was why he disobeyed the Command of God. But in that passage and other similar passages, we are told that God commanded the angels to bow down to Adam, and they obeyed except Iblis. That implies that Iblis had been of the company of angels. In many passages Jinns and men are spoken of together. In lv. 14-15, man is stated to have been created from clay, while Jinns from a flame of fire. The root meaning of *janna*, *yajinnu*, is "to be covered or hidden," and *janna*, *yajinnu*, in the active voice, "to cover or hide," as in vi. 76. Some people say that *jinn* therefore means the hidden qualities or capacities in man; others that it means wild or jungle folk hidden in the hills or forests. I do not wish to be dogmatic, but I think, from a collation and study of the Quranic passages, that the meaning is simply "a spirit," or an invisible or hidden force. In folk-lore stories and romances like the Arabian Nights they become personified into fantastic forms, but with them we are not concerned here.

930. Cf. ii. 117, and n. 120.

All vision : He is
Above all comprehension,⁹³¹
Yet is acquainted with all things.

104. "Now have come to you,
From your Lord, proofs
To open your eyes:
If any will see,
It will be for (the good
Of) his own soul;
If any will be blind,
It will be to his own
(Harm) : I am not (here)
To watch over your doings."⁹³²

105. Thus do We explain
The Signs by various (symbols) :⁹³³
That they may say,
"Thou hast taught us diligently,"
And that We may make
The matter clear
To those who know."⁹³⁴

106. Follow what thou art taught
By inspiration from thy Lord:
There is no god but He:
And turn aside from those
Who join gods with God.

الْأَبْصَارُ
وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

١٠٤- قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ
بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ
فَلَِنَفْسِهِ
وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا
وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيفٍ

١٠٥- وَكَذَلِكَ نَضْرِبُ الْآيَاتِ
وَلِيَعْلَمُوا دُرُوسًا
وَلِيُنذِرَنَّهُ
لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

١٠٦- اتَّبِعْ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
وَاعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

931. *Latif*: fine, subtle, so fine and subtle as to be invisible to the physical eye; so fine as to be imperceptible to the senses; figuratively, so pure as to be above the mental or spiritual vision of ordinary men. The active meaning should also be understood: "One who understands the finest mysteries": (Cf. xxii. 63, and n. 2838).

932. I understand "Say" to be understood in the beginning of this verse. The words would then be the words of the Apostle, as in fact is suggested in verse 107 below. That is why I have enclosed them in inverted commas.

933. Cf. vi. 65, and n. 889.

934. The teaching in the Qurān explains things by various symbols, parables, narratives, and appeals to nature. Each time, a new phase of the question is presented to our minds. This is what a diligent and earnest teacher would do, such as was Muhammad Muṣṭafā. Those who were in search of knowledge and had thus acquired some knowledge of spiritual things were greatly helped to understand more clearly the things of which, before the varied explanations, they had only one-sided knowledge.

107. If it had been God's Plan,⁹³⁵

They would not have taken
False gods : but We
Made thee not one
To watch over their doings,
Nor art thou set
Over them to dispose
Of their affairs.

١٠٧- وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
مَا أَشْرَكُوا
وَمَا جَعَلْنَاكَ
عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا
وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ○

108. ~~Re~~vilie not ye

Those whom they call upon
Besides God, lest
They out of spite
Revile God
In their ignorance.
Thus have We made
Alluring to each people⁹³⁶
Its own doings.
In the end will they
Return to their Lord,
And We shall then

١٠٨- وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ
يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا
بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَا
لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْ
ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْجَعُونَ

935. God's Plan is to use the human will to co-operate in understanding Him and His relations to us. This is the answer to an objector who might say: "If He is All-powerful, why does sin or evil exist in the world? Can He not destroy it?" He can, but His Plan is different, and in any case it is not for a Teacher to force any one to accept the truths which he is inspired to preach and proclaim.

936. A man's actual personal religion depends upon many things,—his personal psychology, the background of his life, his hidden or repressed feelings, tendencies, or history (which psycho-analysis tries to unravel), his hereditary dispositions or antipathies, and all the subtle influences of his education and his environment. The task before the man of God is: (1) to use any of these which can subserve the higher ends, (2) to purify such as have been misused, (3) to introduce new ideas and modes of looking at things, and (4) to combat what is wrong and cannot be mended: all for the purpose of leading to the truth and gradually letting in spiritual light where there was darkness before. If that is not done with discretion and the skill of a spiritual Teacher, there may be not only a reaction of obstinacy, but an unseemly show of dishonour to the true God and His Truth, and doubts would spread among the weaker brethren whose faith is shallow and infirm. What happens to individuals is true collectively of nations or groups of people. They think in their self-obsession that their own ideas are right. God in His infinite compassion bears with them, and asks those who have purer ideas of faith not to vilify the weaknesses of their neighbours, lest the neighbours in their turn vilify the real truth and make matters even worse than before. In so far as there are mistakes, God will forgive and send His grace for helping ignorance and folly. In so far as there is active evil, He will deal with it in His own way. Of course the righteous man must not hide his light under a bushel, or compromise with evil, or refuse to establish right living where he has the power to do so.

Tell them the truth
Of all that they did.

109. They swear their strongest
Oaths by God, that if
A (special) Sign came
To them, by it they would
Believe. Say: "Certainly
(All) Signs are in the power
Of God: but what He
Wishes you (Muslims)
To understand is
That (even) if a (special) Sign
Comes, they will not believe." ⁹³⁷

110. We (too) shall turn
To (confusion) their hearts ⁹³⁸
And their eyes, as they
Refused to believe
In the first instance:
We shall leave them
⁷ In their trespasses;
³⁰ To wander in distraction. ⁹³⁹

فَيُتْلِيهِمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ٥

١٠٩-وَأَنسُوا
بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ آيَاتِهِمْ
لَئِنْ جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ
لَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا
قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ
أَنَّهُمْ إِذَا جَاءَتْ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ٥

١١٠-وَنُفِّلَ قُلُوبَهُمْ
وَأَبْصَارَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ
أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ
وَنَدَّاهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ٥

937. If the Unbelievers are merely obstinate, nothing will convince them. There is no story more full of miracles than the story of Jesus. Yet in that same story we are told that Jesus said: "A wicked adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas": Matt. xvi. 4. There are Signs given by God every day—understood by those who believe. A mere insistence upon some particular or special Sign means mere contumacy and misunderstanding of the spiritual world.

938. Where there is sheer obstinacy and ridicule of faith, the result will be that such a sinner's heart will be hardened and his eyes will be sealed, so that he cannot even see the things visible to ordinary mortals. The sinner gathers impetus in his descent towards wrong.

939. Cf. ii. 15. God's grace is always ready to help human weakness or ignorance, and to accept repentance and give forgiveness. But where the sinner is in actual rebellion, he will be given rope, and it will be his own fault if he wanders about distractedly, without any certain hope or refuge.

- C. 80.—Those in obstinate rebellion
(vi. 111-129). Against God are merely deceived
And deceive each other. Leave them
Alone, but trust and obey God
Openly and in the inmost recesses
Of your heart. The plans of the wicked
Are but plans against their own souls.

SECTION 14.

111. Even if We did send
Unto them angels,
And the dead did speak
Unto them, and We gathered
Together all things before⁹⁴⁰
Their very eyes, they are not
The ones to believe,
Unless it is in God's Plan.
But most of them
Are ignorant (foolish).
112. Likewise did We make
For every Messenger
An enemy,—evil ones⁹⁴¹
Among men and Jinns,
Inspiring each other
With flowery discourses
By way of deception.
If thy Lord had so planned,
They would not have
Done it: so leave them
And their inventions alone.
113. To such (deceit)
Let the hearts of those
Incline, who have no faith
In the Hereafter: let them
Delight in it, and let them
Earn from it what they may.⁹⁴²

۱۱۱- وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَى
وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَفُتِلَا
مَّا كَانُوا إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُوا إِلَى الْيَوْمِ
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَجْهَلُونَ ○

۱۱۲- وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ
عَدُوًّا شَاطِئِينَ الْإِنسِ وَالْجِنِّ
يُوَسِّسُ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ
زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا
وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلْنَاهُ
فَلْيَرْهَبُوا مَا يَخْفَرُونَ ○

۱۱۳- وَلِيَتَصَنَّفَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَدِينُونَ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَلِيَرْضَوْهُ
وَلِيَقْتَرِفُوا مَا هُمْ مُقْتَرِفُونَ ○

940. The most stupendous miracles even according to their ideas would not have convinced them. If the whole pageant of the spiritual world were brought before them, they would not have believed, because they—of their own choice and will—refuse knowledge and faith.

941. What happened in the history of the Holy Prophet happens in the history of all righteous men who have a Message from God. The spirit of evil is ever active and uses men to practise deception by means of highly embellished words and plausible excuses and objections. God permits these things in His Plan. It is not for us to complain. Our faith is tested, and we must stand the test steadfastly.

942. People who have no faith in the future destiny of man may listen to and be taken in by the deceit of evil. If they take a delight in it, let them. See what they gain by it. Their gains will be as deceitful as their delight. For the end of evil must be evil.

114. Say: "Shall I seek
For judge other than God?—
When He it is
Who hath sent unto you
The Book, explained in detail." 948
They know full well,
To whom We have sent
The Book, that it hath come
From thy Lord in truth.
Never be then
Of those who doubt.

115. The Word of thy Lord
Doth find its fulfilment
In truth and in justice:
None can change His Words:
For He is the one Who
Heareth and knoweth all.

116. Wert thou to follow
The common run of those
On earth, they will lead
Thee away from the Way
Of God. They follow
Nothing but conjecture: they
Do nothing but lie.

117. Thy Lord knoweth best
Who strayeth from His Way:
He knoweth best
Who they are that receive
His guidance.

118. So eat of (meats)
On which God's name
Hath been pronounced,
If ye have faith
In His Signs.

119. Why should ye not
Eat of (meats) on which
God's name hath been
Pronounced, when He hath
Explained to you in detail
What is forbidden to you—

۱۱۴- اَلَيْسَ لِلّٰهِ اَبْتَعِي حَكْمًا
وَهُوَ الَّذِي اَنْزَلَ اِلَيْكُمْ
الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا
وَالَّذِينَ اتَيْنَهُمُ الْعِلْمَ
يَعْلَمُونَ اَنَّهُ مُنْزَلٌ مِنْ رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ
فَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُسْتَعْزِلِينَ ۝

۱۱۵- وَتَوَعَّدْتَ كُلَّ مَثَلٍ رَبِّكَ
صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا ۚ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ
وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ۝

۱۱۶- وَاِنْ تَطِعُوا اَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ
يُضِلُّوكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ
اِنْ يَكْفُرُونَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ
وَاِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ۝

۱۱۷- اِنْ رَبِّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ
مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ
وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ۝

۱۱۸- تَكُلُوا مِنْ اَمَّا ذَكَرَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ رَايْتَهُ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

۱۱۹- وَمَا لَكُمْ اَلَّا تَكُلُوا مِنْ اَمَّا ذَكَرَ اللّٰهُ
عَلَيْهِ
وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ

943. The righteous man seeks no other standard of judgment but God's Will. How can he, when God in His grace has explained His Will in the Qur'an, with details which men of every capacity can understand? The humblest can learn lessons of right conduct in daily life, and the most advanced can find the highest wisdom in its spiritual teaching, enriched as it is with all kinds of beautiful illustrations from nature and the story of man.

Except under compulsion⁹⁴⁴
Of necessity?
But many do mislead
By their appetites unchecked
By knowledge. Thy Lord
Knoweth best those who
transgress.

120. Eschew all sin,
Open or secret :
Those who earn sin
Will get due recompense
For their "earnings."

121. Eat not of (meats)
On which God's name
Hath not been pronounced:
That would be impiety.
But the evil ones
Ever inspire their friends
To contend with you.
If ye were to obey them,
Ye would indeed be Pagans.

SECTION 15.

122. Can he who was dead,⁹⁴⁵
To whom We gave life,
And a Light whereby
He can walk amongst men,
Be like him who is
In the depths of darkness,
From which he can
Never come out?
For to those without Faith
Their own deeds seem pleasing.

123. Thus have We placed
Leaders in every town,

إِلَّا مَا اطَّعِرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ
وَإِنْ كَثِيرٌ أَلْيَضُّونَ بِأَهْوَاءِهِمْ
بَعْدَ عَلِيمٍ
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِينَ ○
۱۲۰- وَذُرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِشْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ الْإِشْمَ
سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَقْتَرِفُونَ ○

۱۲۱- وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا
مِمَّا كُمْتُمْ مِنْكُمْ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ
وَإِنَّهُ لَنُفْسٌ وَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانِ
لَيُؤْخِذُكُمْ إِلَى أُولِيئِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُكُمْ
وَإِنَّ أَطْعَمْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ إِيَّكُمْ لَنُفْسٌ كُفْرًا ○

۱۲۲- أَوْ مَنْ كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ
وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ
كَمَنْ مَقْلَعُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ
لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِنْهَا
كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْكُفْرَ لِمَنْ كَانَ كَاكُلًا يَعْمَلُونَ
۱۲۳- وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَرًا

944. Cf. v. 4. When a clear law has explained what is lawful and unlawful in food, it is wrong to raise fresh scruples and mislead the ignorant.

945. Here is an allegory of the good man with his divine mission and the evil man with his mission of evil. The former, before he got his spiritual life, was like one dead. It was God's grace that gave him spiritual life, with a Light by which he could walk and guide his own footsteps as well as the footsteps of those who are willing to follow God's light. The opposite type is that which hates God's light, which lives in the depths of darkness, and which plots and burrows against all that is good. But the plots of evil recoil on itself, although it thinks that they will hurt the good. Can these two types be for a moment compared with each other? Perhaps the lead in every centre of population is taken by the men of evil. But the good men should not be discouraged. They should work in righteousness and fulfil their mission.

Its wicked men, to plot
(And burrow) therein :
But they only plot
Against their own souls,
And they perceive it not.

124. When there comes to them
A Sign (from God),
They say: "We shall not
Believe until we receive
One (exactly) like those
Received by the apostles."⁹⁴⁶
God knoweth best where
(And how) to carry out
His mission. Soon
Will the wicked
Be overtaken by
Humiliation before God,
And a severe punishment,
For all their plots.

125. Those whom God (in His Plan)
Willeth to guide,—He openeth⁹⁴⁷
Their breast to Islam ;
Those whom He willeth
To leave straying,—He maketh
Their breast close and
constricted,
As if they had to climb
Up to the skies: thus
Doth God (heap) the penalty
On those who refuse to believe.

126. This is the Way
Of thy Lord, leading straight:

فَجَرَمَهُمْ لَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ أَفِيهَا
وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ إِلَّا يَأْتِيهِمْ
وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ○

١٢٤- وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ آيَةٌ
قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَى
مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ ○
اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ
سَيُجَنِّبُ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا صَغَارًا عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ
وَعَذَابٌ شَدِيدًا لِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ○

١٢٥- مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ
يَفْرَحْ بِهِ إِنَّهُ يَرْزُقُ الْإِسْلَامَ ○
وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ
يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا
كَاكُمَا يُضِيقُ فِي السَّمَاءِ
كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ○

١٢٦- وَهَذَا صِرَاطٌ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ○

946. Besides the teaching in God's Word, and the teaching in God's world, of nature and history and human contacts, many Signs come to the men of God, which they humbly receive and try to understand; and many Signs also come to the ungodly, in the shape of warnings or otherwise, which the ungodly either do not heed, or deliberately reject. The Signs in the two cases are not the same, and that becomes one of their perverse arguments against Faith. But God's working will be according to His own Will and Plan, and not according to the wishes or whims of the ungodly.

947. God's Universal Plan is the *Qadr* *wa Qadr*, which is so much misunderstood. That Plan is unalterable, and that is His Will. It means that in the spiritual world, as in the physical world, there are laws of justice, mercy, grace, penalty, etc., which work as surely as anything we know. If, then, a man refuses Faith, becomes a rebel, with each step he goes further and further down, and his pace will be accelerated; he will scarcely be able to take spiritual breath, and his recovery,—in spite of God's mercy which he has rejected,—will be as difficult as if he had to climb up to the skies. On the other hand, the godly will find, with each step, the next step easier. Jesus expressed this truth paradoxically: "He that hath, to him shall be given; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath": Mark, iv. 25. John (vi. 65) makes Jesus say: "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."

We have detailed the Signs
For those who celebrate
His praise.

127. For them will be a Home
Of Peace in the presence
Of their Lord: He will be
Their Friend, because
They practised (righteousness).

128. One day will He gather
Them all together, (and say):
"Oh ye assembly of Jinns!"⁹⁴⁹
Many were the men
Ye seduced." Their friends
Amongst men will say:
"Our Lord! we made profit"⁹⁵⁰
From each other: but (alas!)
We reached our term—
Which Thou didst appoint
For us." He will say:
"The Fire be your dwelling-place:
You will dwell therein for ever,
Except as God willeth."⁹⁵¹
For thy Lord is full
Of wisdom and knowledge.

129. Thus do We make
The wrong-doers turn
To each other, because
Of what they earn.⁹⁵²

قَدْ فَضَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ كَذِبُونَ

۱۲۷- لَهُمْ دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ

وَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمْ

بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

۱۲۸- وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا

يَمْشُرُ الرَّجُلَ

قَدْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ

وَقَالَ أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ

رَبَّنَا اسْتَمْتَعَ بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ

وَكَلَفْنَا أَجَلَكَ الَّذِي أَجَلْتَ لَنَا

قَالَ النَّارُ مَثْوَاكُمْ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا

إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

۱۲۹- وَكَذَلِكَ نُفَوِّضُ الْغُلُوبَ

بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

ج

C. 81.—God punishes not mere negligence:

(vi. 130-150). There are degrees in good and evil
Deeds. God is Merciful, but
His Plan is sure, and none
Can stand in its way. We must
Avoid all superstition, and all excess,
And humbly ask for His guidance.

949. Jinns are spirits—here evil spirits. See vi. 100, n. 929.

950. It is common experience that the forces of evil make an alliance with each other, and seem thus to make a profit by their mutual log-rolling. But this is only in this material world. When the limited term expires, their unholy bargains will be exposed, and there will be nothing but regret.

951. Eternity and infinity are abstract terms. They have no precise meaning in our human experience. The qualification, "except as God willeth," makes it more intelligible, as we can form some idea—however inadequate—of a Will and Plan, and we know God by His attribute of Mercy as well as of Justice.

952. See n. 950 above. Evil consorts with evil because of their mutual bargains. But in doing so they save the righteous from further temptation.

SECTION 16.

130. "Oh ye assembly of Jinns
And men! came there not
Unto you apostles from
amongst you,⁹⁵³
Setting forth unto you
Our Signs, and warning you
Of the meeting of this Day
Of yours?" They will say :
"We bear witness against
Ourselves." It was
The life of this world
That deceived them. So
Against themselves will they
Bear witness that they
Rejected Faith.
131. (The apostles were sent) thus,
So that thy Lord should not
Destroy for their wrong-doing
Men's habitations whilst
Their occupants were unwarned.
132. To each one is a degree⁹⁵⁴
According to the deeds
Which he doth : for thy Lord
Is not unmindful
Of anything that they do.
133. Thy Lord is Self-sufficient,⁹⁵⁵
Full of Mercy : if it were
His Will, He could destroy
You, and in your place
Appoint whom He will
As your successors, even as
He raised you up
From the posterity
Of other people.

١٣٠- يٰٓعٰشِرَ الْجِيْنَ وَالْاِنْسِ
اَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِنْكُمْ
يَقُطُّوْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِي
وَيُنْذِرُوْكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هٰذَا
قَالُوْا سَهْدًا عَلٰى اَنْفُسِنَا
وَغَرَبْنٰهُمْ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا
وَسَهَدُوْا عَلٰى اَنْفُسِهِمْ
اَلْهُمْ كَانُوْا كٰفِرِيْنَ ۝

١٣١- ذٰلِكَ اَنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ مُّهْلِكٌ
الْقُرْاٰنِ بِظُلْمٍ
وَاَهْلُهَا غٰفِلُوْنَ ۝

١٣٢- وَلِكُلٍّ دَرَجٰتٌ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوْا
وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ
عَمَّا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝

١٣٣- وَرَبُّكَ الْغَنِيُّ ذُو الرَّحْمٰةِ
اِنْ يَشَآءْ يَذْهَبْكُمْ
وَيَسْتَخْلِفْ مِنْ بَعْدِكُمْ
مَا يَشَآءُ كَمَا اَنْشَأَكُمْ
مِّنْ ذُرِّيَةِ نٰوِيْلٍ ۝

953. "Apostles from amongst you." This is addressed to the whole gathering of men and Jinns. Are the Jinns but disembodied spirits of evil men?

954. On good and evil there are infinite degrees, in our deeds and motives : so will there be degrees in our spiritual position. For everything is known to God, better than it is to ourselves.

955. God is not dependent on our prayer or service. It is out of His Mercy that He desires our own good. Any race or people to whom He gives chances should understand that its failure does not affect God. He could create others in their place, as He did in times past, and is doing in our own day, if only we had the wit to see it.

134. All that hath been⁹⁵⁶
Promised unto you
Will come to pass:
Nor can ye frustrate it
(In the least bit).

١٣٤- إِنْ مَا تَوَعَدُوا مِنْ لَدُنِّي
وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُفْضِرِينَ ۝

135. Say: "Oh my people!
Do whatever ye can:⁹⁵⁷
I will do (my part):
Soon will ye know
Who it is whose end
Will be (best) in the Hereafter:
Certain it is that
The wrong-doers will not prosper."

١٣٥- قُلْ يَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ مِثْقَلِ ذِرَاةٍ عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ
إِنِّي عَامِلٌ ۚ فَمَنْ يَتُوبْكُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
مَنْ يَكُفِّرْ لَهُ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ
إِنَّا لَا يَفْقَهُونَ الظَّالِمُونَ ۝

136. Out of what God
Hath produced in abundance
In tilth and in cattle,
They assigned Him a share:
They say, according to their
fancies:⁹⁵⁸
"This is for God, and this"—
For Our "partners"!—
But the share of their "partners"
Reacheth not God, whilst
The share of God reacheth
Their "partners"! Evil
(And unjust) is their assignment!

١٣٦- وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَ
الْأَنْعَامِ
تَصْدِيقًا فَقَالُوا هَذَا لِلَّهِ بِزَعْدِهِمْ
وَهَذَا لِلشُّرَكَائِنَا
فَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ مِنْكَ لَاقٍ ۚ فَلَا يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ إِلَىٰ شُرَكَائِهِمْ
سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ۝

956. Both the good news and the warning which God's apostles came to give will be fulfilled. Nothing can stop God's Universal Plan. See n. 947 to vi. 125.

957. In so far as this is addressed to the Unbelievers it is a challenge: "Do your utmost; nothing will deter me from my duty: we shall see who wins in the end." Passing from the particular occasion, we can understand it in a more general sense, which is true for all time. Let the evil ones do their worst. Let those who believe do all they can, according to their opportunities and abilities. The individual must do the straight duty that lies before him. In the end God will judge, and His judgment is always true and just.

958. There is scathing sarcasm here, which some of the Commentators have missed. The Pagans have generally a big Pantheon, though above it they have a vague idea of a Supreme God. But the material benefits go to the godlings, the fancied "partners" of God; for they have temples, priests, dedications, etc., while the true and supreme God has only lip-worship, or at best a share with numerous "partners". This was so in Arabia also. The shares assigned to the "partners" went to the priests and hangers-on of the "partners", who were many and clamorous for their rights. The share assigned to God possibly went to the poor, but more probably went to the priests who had the cult of the "partners", for the Supreme God had no separate priests of His own. It is also said that when heaps were thus laid out, if any portion of God's heap fell into the heaps of the "partners", the priests greedily and promptly appropriated it, while in the contrary case, the "partners'" priests were careful to reclaim any portion from what they called "God's heap". The absurdity of the whole thing is ridiculed. God created everything: how can He have a share?

137. Even so, in the eyes
Of most of the Pagans,⁹⁵⁹
Their "partners" made alluring
The slaughter of their children,
In order to lead them
To their own destruction,
And cause confusion
In their religion.
If God had willed,
They would not have done so :
But leave alone
Them and their inventions.

138. And they say that
Such and such cattle and crops⁹⁶⁰
Are taboo, and none should
Eat of them except those
Whom—so they say—We
Wish ; further, there are
Cattle forbidden to yoke⁹⁶¹
Or burden, and cattle
On which, (at slaughter),
The name of God is not⁹⁶²
Pronounced ;—inventions
Against God's name : soon
Will He requite them
For their inventions.

139. They say : " What is
In the wombs of
Such and such cattle
Is specially reserved
(For food) for our men,
And forbidden to our women ;
But if it is still-born,
Then all share."⁹⁶³

وَكُنْ لَكَ ذِكْرٌ لِكَيْلِي مِنَ الشِّرْكِينَ
تَقْتُلُ أَوْلَادَهُمْ شُرَكَاءَهُمْ لِيَكُونَ لَهُمْ
وَلِيْلِي سُوا عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَكُونُ
لَهُمْ شَاءَ اللَّهِ
مَا فَعَلُوا
فَكَرَهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ ○

١٣٨- وَقَالُوا هَذِهِ أَنْعَامٌ وَهَذِهِ حَرْثٌ
لَا يَطْعَمُهَا إِلَّا مَنْ نَشَاءُ
بَدْعُ غَيْرِهِمْ وَأَنْعَامٌ حُرِّمَتْ ظُهُورُهَا وَ
أَنْعَامٌ
لَا يَذْكُرُونَ اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا
افْتِرَاءٌ عَلَيْهِ
سَيَجْزِيهِمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ○

١٣٩- وَقَالُوا مَا فِي بُطُونِ هَذِهِ الْأَنْعَامِ
خَالِصَةٌ لِرِذَاؤِنَا
وَمَحْضَرٌّ عَلَى أَرْوَاحِنَا
وَلَا يَكُنْ مَيْتَةً فَهُمْ فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ

959. The false gods and idols—among many nations, including the Arabs—were supposed to require human sacrifices. Ordinarily such sacrifices are revolting to man, but they are made "alluring"—a sacred rite—by Pagan custom, which falsely arrogates to itself the name of religion. Such customs, if allowed, would do nothing but destroy the people who practise them, and make their religion but a confused bundle of revolting superstitions.

960. A taboo of certain foods is sometimes a device of the priesthood to get special things for itself. It has to be enforced by pretending that the prohibition for others is by the Will of God. It is a lie or invention against God. Most superstitions are.

961. Cattle dedicated to heathen gods may be reserved from all useful work ; in that case they are a dead loss to the community, and they may, besides, do a great deal of damage to fields and crops.

962. If meat is killed in the name of heathen gods, it would naturally not be killed by the solemn rite in God's name, by which alone the killing can be justified for food. See n. 698 to v. 5.

963. These are further Pagan superstitions about cattle. Some have already been noted in v. 106, which may be consulted with the notes.

For their (false) attribution
(Of superstitions to God),
He will soon punish them:
For He is full
Of wisdom and knowledge.

سَيَجْزِيهِمْ وَصْفَهُمْ
إِنَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

140. Lost are those who slay
Their children, from folly,
Without knowledge, and forbid
Food which God hath provided
For them, inventing (lies)
Against God. They have
Indeed gone astray
And heeded no guidance.

۱۴۰- قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا أَوْلَادَهُمْ سَفَهًا
بَغْيِرَ عِلْمٍ وَحَرَّمُوا مَا رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ
افْتِرَاءً عَلَى اللَّهِ
قَدْ ضَلُّوا وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ۝

SECTION 17.

141. It is He who produceth⁹⁶⁴
Gardens, with trellises
And without, and dates,
And tilth with produce
Of all kinds, and olives
And pomegranates,
Similar (in kind)
And different (in variety):⁹⁶⁵
Eat of their fruit
In their season, but render
The dues that are proper
On the day that the harvest
Is gathered. But waste not⁹⁶⁶
By excess: for God
Loveth not the wasters.

۱۴۱- وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ جَنَّاتٍ مَّعْرُوشَاتٍ
وَعَذِرٍ مَّعْرُوشَاتٍ وَالنَّخْلَ
وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا أَكْلُهُ وَالزَّيْتُونَ
وَالزَّمَانَ مُتَشَابِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ
كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ
وَأَتُوا حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ ۚ
وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا
إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ۝

142. Of the cattle are some
For burden and some for
meat: ⁹⁶⁷

۱۴۲- وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ حَمُولَةٌ وَفَرَسَاتٌ

964. *Ansha-a* : see vi. 98, n. 923.

965. A beautiful passage, with music to match the meaning. Cf. vi. 99 and notes.

966. "Waste not, want not," says the English proverb. Here the same wisdom is preached from a higher motive. See what magnificent means God provides in nature for the sustenance of all His creatures, because He loves them all. Enjoy them in moderation and be grateful. But commit no excess, and commit no waste: the two things are the same from different angles of vision. If you do, you take away something from other creatures and God would not like your selfishness.

967. Superstition kills true religion. We come back to the Arab Pagan superstitions about cattle for food. The horse is not mentioned, because horse flesh was not an article of diet and there were no superstitions about it. Sheep and goats, camels and oxen were the usual sources of meat. Sheep and goats were not used as beasts of burden, but camels (of both sexes) were used for carrying burdens, and oxen for the plough, though cows were mainly used for milk and meat. The words "some for burden and some for meat" do not differentiate whole species, except that they give you the first two and the last two as categories.

Eat what God hath provided
For you, and follow not
The footsteps of Satan :
For he is to you
An avowed enemy.

143. (Take) eight (head of cattle) ⁹⁶⁸
In (four) pairs:
Of sheep a pair,
And of goats a pair;
Say, hath He forbidden
The two males,
Or the two females,
Or (the young) which the wombs
Of the two females enclose?
Tell me with knowledge
If ye are truthful:

144. Of camels a pair,
And of oxen a pair;
Say, hath He forbidden
The two males,
Or the two females,
Or (the young) which the wombs
Of the two females enclose?—
Were ye present when God
Ordered you such a thing?
But who doth more wrong
Than one who invents
A lie against God,
To lead astray men
Without knowledge?
For God guideth not
People who do wrong.

SECTION 18.

145. Say: "I find not
In the Message received
By me by inspiration
Any (meat) forbidden
To be eaten by one
Who wishes to eat it,
Unless it be carrion,
Or blood poured forth," ⁹⁶⁹

كُلُوا مِن مَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ
إِنَّهُ لَكُمُ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ۝

١٣٣- ثَمِينَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ مِنَ الْخَنَازِيرِ
وَمِنَ الْبَعِزِ اثْنَيْنِ
قُلْ أَلَّذِكْرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ
أَمِ الْاُنْثَيْنِ
أَمْ اَشْتَمَلْتُ عَلَيْهِ اَرْحَامُ الْاُنْثَيْنِ
يَتَعَوَّنِي بِهِمَا اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۝

١٣٤- وَمِنَ الْاِبِلِ اثْنَيْنِ
وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ اثْنَيْنِ
قُلْ أَلَّذِكْرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمْ الْاُنْثَيْنِ
أَمْ اَشْتَمَلْتُ عَلَيْهِ اَرْحَامُ الْاُنْثَيْنِ
اَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ اِذْ وَضَعَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِيْهِ
فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
لِيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
اِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝

١٣٥- قُلْ لَا اَجِدُ فِيْ مَا اُوْحِيَ اِلَيَّ
مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ
يُطْعَمُهُ اِلَّا اَنْ يَكُوْنَ مِنْ نِّسَاءِ اَوْ دَمًا
تَسْفُوْحًا

968. The superstitions referred to in vi. 139 and v. 106 are further ridiculed in this verse and the next.

969. Blood poured forth: as distinguished from blood adhering to flesh, or the liver, or such other internal organs purifying the blood.

Or the flesh of swine,—
For it is an abomination—
Or, what is impious, (meat)
On which a name has been
Invoked, other than God's."
But (even so), if a person
Is forced by necessity,
Without wilful disobedience,
Nor transgressing due limits,—
Thy Lord is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

146. For those who followed
The Jewish Law, We forbade
Every (animal) with
Undivided hoof,⁹⁷⁰
And We forbade them
The fat of the ox⁹⁷¹
And the sheep, except
What adheres to their backs
Or their entrails,
Or is mixed up
With a bone :
This in recompense
For their wilful disobedience :
For We are True
(In Our ordinances).

147. If they accuse thee
Of falsehood, say :
" Your Lord is full
Of mercy all-embracing ;
But from people in guilt
Never will His wrath
Be turned back.

148. Those who give partners
(To God) will say :

أَوْ نَحْمَ خَنَازِيرَ
فَالْأَكْثَرُ يَجْسُ أَوْ فَسَقًا
أَهْلَ يُغَدِّرُ اللَّهُ بِهِ
فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ
فَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ○

١٣٦- وَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا
حَرَمْنَا كُلَّ ذِي ظُلْفٍ
وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ وَالْغَنَمِ
حَرَمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ شَحُومَهُمَا
إِلَّا مَا حَمَلَتْ ظُهُورُهُمَا
أَوِ الْحَوَايَا أَوْ مَا اخْتَلَطَ بِعَظْمٍ
ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَبْغِيهِمْ
وَلَا تَأْخُذُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ ○

١٣٧- فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ رَبُّكُمْ
ذُو رَحْمَةٍ وَاسِعَةٍ
وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَأْسُهُ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ○

١٣٨- سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا

970. *ḡufur* may mean claw or hoof ; it is in the singular number ; but as no animal has a single claw, and there is no point in a division of claws, we must look to a hoof for the correct interpretation. In the Jewish Law (Leviticus, xi. 3-6), " whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts " was lawful as food, but the camel, the coney (rabbit), and the hare were not lawful, because they do not " divide the hoof ". " Undivided hoof " therefore is the correct interpretation. These three animals, unlawful to the Jews, are lawful in Islam. Cf. iv. 160.

971. In Leviticus (vii. 23) it is laid down that " ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat." As regards the exceptions, it is to be noticed that priests were enjoined (Leviticus, vii. 6) to eat of the fat in the trespass offering, which was considered holy, *viz.*, " the rum " (back and bone) " and the fat that covereth the inwards " (entrails), (Leviticus, vii. 3).

"If God had wished,
We should not have
Given partners to Him,
Nor would our fathers;
Nor should we have had⁹⁷³
Any taboos." So did
Their ancestors argue
Falsely, until they tasted
Of Our wrath. Say:
"Have ye any (certain)
Knowledge? If so, produce
It before us. Ye follow
Nothing but conjecture:
Ye do nothing but lie."

149. Say: "With God is the
argument⁹⁷³
That reaches home: if it had
Been His Will, He could
Indeed have guided you all."

150. Say: "Bring forward your
witnesses
To prove that God did
Forbid so and so." If they
Bring such witnesses,
Be not thou amongst them:⁹⁷⁴
Nor follow thou the vain
Desires of such as treat
Our Signs as falsehoods,
And such as believe not
In the Hereafter: for they
Hold others as equal
With their Guardian-Lord.⁹⁷⁵

لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا
وَلَا حَزَفْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ ؕ
كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
حَتَّى دُافُوا بِأَسْنَانِهِمْ
قُلْ هَلْ جُنْدٌ كُفِرْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ لَفُتُمْ جُؤُهُ لَنَا
إِنْ تَقْبَعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ
وَلَنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا تَحْرُصُونَ ۝

١٤٩- قُلْ قَبْلَهُ النُّجُومُ بِأَلْفِ لُغَةٍ
فَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَّ سَكْرًا جَمْعِيْنَ ۝

١٥٠- قُلْ هَلْكَ شُهَدَاءُ كُمْ
الَّذِينَ يَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ حَزَفَ هَذَا
وَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَلَا تَشْهَدُ مَعَهُمْ
وَلَا تَكْفُرْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ
وَهُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ عَمَّا يُنذَرُونَ ۝

C. 82.—God's commands are not irrational
(vi. 151-165). Taboos, but based on the moral law,
And conformable to reason. His Way

972. As used by the Pagans, the argument is false, for it implies (a) that men have no personal responsibility, (b) that they are the victims of a Determinism against which they are helpless, and (c) that they might therefore go on doing just what they liked. It is also inconsistent, for if (c) is true, (c) cannot be true. Nor is it meant to be taken seriously.

973. On the other hand, the argument cuts true and deep, as from God to His creatures. God is Omnipotent, and can do all that we can conceive. But He, in His Plan, has given man some responsibility, and some choice in order to train man's will. If man falls, he is helped in various ways by God's mercy and grace. But man cannot go on sinning, and in a state of sin, expect God to be pleased with him (vi. 147).

974. The Pagan superstitions were of course baseless, and in many cases harmful and debasing. If God's name was taken as supporting them, no true man of God could be taken in, or join in support simply because God's name was taken in vain.

975. Cf. vi. 1. God, who created and who cherishes and cares for all, should have the first claim on our attention. Those who set up false gods fail to understand God's true governance or their own true destiny.

Is the straight Way, of justice and truth.
In unity and faith must we dedicate
All our life to His service, and His
Alone, to Whom we shall return.

SECTION 19.

151. Say: "Come, I will rehearse
What God hath (really) ⁹⁷⁶
Prohibited you from": join not
Anything as equal with Him;
Be good to your parents;
Kill not your children
On a plea of want;—We
Provide sustenance for you
And for them;—come not
Nigh to shameful deeds,
Whether open or secret;
Take not life, which God
Hath made sacred, except
By way of justice and law: ⁹⁷⁷
Thus doth He command you,
That ye may learn wisdom.

152. And come not nigh
To the orphan's property,
Except to improve it,
Until he attain the age
Of full strength; give measure
And weight with (full) justice;—
No burden do We place
On any soul, but that
Which it can bear;—
Whatever ye say, speak justly,

۱۵۱- قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَلَّ شَيْئًا بِهِ شِبَعًا
وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا
وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ
تَنْصُنُّوهُمْ نَزْوًى لَهُمْ وَإِلَىٰ هُنَّ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا
الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ
وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ
ذَلِكَ وَطَعْنُكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ۝

۱۵۲- وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ
إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ
وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ يَا قُسْطُ
لَا تُكْرِفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا
وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا

976. Instead of following Pagan superstitions, and being in constant terror of imaginary taboos and prohibitions, we should study the true moral law, whose sanction is God's Law. The first step is that we should recognise that He is the One and Only Lord and Cherisher. The mention of goodness to parents immediately afterwards suggests: (1) that God's love of us and care for us may—on an infinitely higher plane—be understood by our ideal of parental love, which is purely unselfish; (2) that our first duty among our fellow creatures is to our father and mother, whose love leads us to the conception of divine love. Arising from that is the conception of our converse duties to our children. God provides sustenance (material and spiritual) not only for us, but for them; hence any custom like the Pagan custom of sacrificing children to Moloch stands condemned. Then come the moral prohibitions against lewdness and all unseemly acts, relating to sex or otherwise, open or secret. This is followed by the prohibition of killing or fighting. All these things are conformable to our own interests, and therefore true wisdom from our own point of view.

977. For the comprehensive word *haqq* I have used the two words "justice and law": other significations implied are: right, truth, what is becoming, etc. It is not only that human life is sacred, but all life is sacred. Even in killing animals for food, a dedicatory formula, "in the name of God" has to be employed, to make it lawful; see n. 698 to v. 5, and n. 962 to vi. 138.

Even if a near relative
Is concerned; and fulfil
The Covenant of God:⁹⁷⁸
Thus doth He command you,
That ye may remember.

153. Verily, this is My Way,
Leading straight: follow it:
Follow not (other) paths:
They will scatter you about
From His (great) Path:
Thus doth He command you,
That ye may be righteous.⁹⁷⁹

154. Moreover, We gave Moses
The Book, completing
(Our favour) to those
Who would do right,
And explaining all things⁹⁸⁰
In detail,—and a guide
And a mercy, that they
Might believe in the meeting
With their Lord.

SECTION 20.

155. And this is a Book
Which We have revealed
As a blessing: so follow it
And do right, that ye
May receive mercy:
156. Lest ye should say:
"The Book was revealed
To two Peoples before us,
And for our part, we
Remained unacquainted⁹⁸¹

وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ

وَيَعْلَمُ اللّٰهُ اَوْفَوْا

ذٰلِكُمْ وَظَعَمْنٰ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ

۱۵۳-وَاِنَّ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيْمٌ ۙ فَاتَّبِعُوْهُ

وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ

سَبِيْلِهٖ

ذٰلِكُمْ وَظَعَمْنٰ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ۝

۱۵۴-ثُمَّ اٰتَيْنَا مُّوْسٰى الْكِتٰبَ تَمَامًا

عَلٰى الَّذِىْ اٰحْسَنَ

وَنُفَصِّلُ الْاٰیٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ عٰلَمِيْنَ

وَهٰذِىْ وَرَحْمَةٌ

لَّعَلَّكُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ۙ وَرَحْمَةٌ

۱۵۵-وَهٰذَا كِتٰبٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ مُبَارَكٌ ۙ فَاتَّبِعُوْهُ

وَاقْبَلُوْا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ۝

۱۵۶-اِنْ تَقُوْلُوْا اِنَّمَا اُنْزِلَ الْحَكِيْمُ عَلٰى

طٰلُوتٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِنَا ۙ وَاِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ

978. Cf. v. 1, and n. 662.

979. Note again the triple refrain with variations, in vi. 151, 152, and 153. In verse 151, we have the moral law, which it is for our own good to follow: "Thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom." In verse 152, we have to deal justly and rightly with others; we are apt to think too much of ourselves and forget others: "Thus doth He command you, that ye may remember." In verse 153 our attention is called to the Straight Way, the Way of God, the only Way that leads to righteousness: "Thus doth He command you, that ye may be righteous."

980. The revelation to Moses went into the details of people's lives, and thus served as a practical guide to the Jews and after them to the Christians. Admittedly the Message delivered by Christ dealt with general principles only and in no way with details. The message of Islam as in the Qurān is the next complete guide in point of time after that of Moses.

981. Because the diligent studies of the earlier People of the Book were in languages foreign to the new People of Islam, or because they were meant for circumstances different from those of the new world after Islam.

With all that they learned
By assiduous study ;"

157. Or lest ye should say :
" If the Book had only
Been revealed to us,
We should have followed
Its guidance better than they."
Now then hath come
Unto you a Clear (Sign)⁹⁸²
From your Lord,—and a guide
And a mercy : then who
Could do more wrong
Than one who rejecteth
God's Signs, and turneth
Away therefrom ? In good time
Shall we requite those
Who turn away from Our Signs,
With a dreadful penalty,
For their turning away.

158. Are they waiting to see
If the angels come to them,
Or thy Lord (Himself),
Or certain of the Signs
Of thy Lord !
The day that certain
Of the Signs of thy Lord
Do come, no good⁹⁸³
Will it do to a soul⁹⁸⁴
To believe in them then,
If it believed not before
Nor earned righteousness
Through its Faith. Say :
" Wait ye : we too
Are waiting." ⁹⁸⁴

وَرَأَوْا آيَاتِنَا

١٥٦- أَوْ تَقُولُوا لَوْ أَنَّا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْكِتَابُ
لَكُنَّا أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمْ
فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ
فَمَن أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَصَدَّكَ عَنْهَا
سَتَجِدَى الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ الْبَيِّنَاتِ
سَوَاءً الْعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصُدُّونَ ○

١٥٨- هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ
أَوْ يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ
يَوْمَ يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ
لَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ تَفَسُّرُهَا نَافِثَاتُ
لَهُمْ تَكُنْ أَمْنٌ مِّن قَبْلُ
أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهِمْ خِلَافٌ
قُلِ انْتَظِرُوا إِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُونَ ○

982. The Qurān and the life and the teaching of Muhammad the Apostle of God.

983. There is no merit in faith in things that you are compelled to acknowledge when they actually happen. Faith is belief in things which you do not see with your eyes but you understand with your spiritual sense: if your whole will consents to it, it results in deeds of righteousness, which are the evidence of your faith.

984. The waiting in the two cases is in quite different senses: the foolish man without faith is waiting for things which will not happen, and is surprised by the real things which do happen; the righteous man of faith is waiting for the fruits of righteousness, of which he has an assured hope; in a higher state of spiritual elevation, even the fruits have no personal meaning to him, for God is to him all-in-all: vi. 162.

159. As for those who divide⁹⁸⁵
 Their religion and break up
 Into sects, thou hast
 No part in them in the least :
 Their affair is with God :
 He will in the end
 Tell them the truth
 Of all that they did.

١٥٩- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَقَالُوا شَيْعًا
 لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ
 إِنَّمَا أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ
 شُرَكَاءُ لَهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ○

160. He that doeth good
 Shall have ten times
 As much to his credit :
 He that doeth evil
 Shall be recompensed
 According to his evil :⁹⁸⁶
 No wrong shall be done
 Unto (any of) them.

١٦٠- مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَثَرِهَا
 وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ
 فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا
 وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ○

161. Say : " Verily, my Lord
 Hath guided me to
 A Way that is straight,—
 A religion of right,—
 The Path (trod) by Abraham
 The true in faith,
 And he (certainly)
 Joined not gods with God."

١٦١- قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
 مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قَبِيلاً
 مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا
 وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ○

162. Say : " Truly, my prayer
 And my service of sacrifice,
 My life and my death,
 Are (all) for God,
 The Cherisher of the Worlds :

١٦٢- قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي
 وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي
 لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ○

163. No partner hath He :
 This am I taught,
 And I am the first
 Of those who bow
 To His Will.

١٦٣- لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ
 وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ
 وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ○

164. Say : " Shall I seek
 For (my) Cherisher

١٦٤- قُلْ أَعْتَدِ اللَّهُ لِيَغْنِيَ رَبًّا

985. *Divide their religion* : *farraqū* : i. e., (1) make a distinction between one part of it and another, take the part which suits them and reject the rest ; or (2) have religion one day of the week and the world the rest of the six days ; or (3) keep " religion in its right place," as if it did not claim to govern the whole life ; make a sharp distinction between the secular and the religious ; or (4) show a sectarian bias, seek differences in views, so as to break up the unity of Islam.

986. God is just as well as generous. To the good the reward is multiplied ten times (i. e., far above merits) on account of His generosity. To the evil, the punishment is no more than commensurate with their sin, and even so the door of mercy is always open to those who sincerely repent and show it by their conduct.

Other than God,
When He is the Cherisher
Of all things (that exist)?
Every soul draws the meed
Of its acts on none⁹⁸⁷
But itself: no bearer
Of burdens can bear
The burden of another.
Your goal in the end
Is towards God: He will tell
You the truth of the things
Wherein ye disputed "

165. It is He Who hath made
You (His) agents, inheritors⁹⁸⁸
Of the earth: He hath raised
You in ranks, some above
Others: that He might try
You in the gifts ye receive:
For thy Lord is quick
In punishment: yet He
Is indeed Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا
وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ
ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ
فَيُنْفِثُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

۱۶۵- وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ
وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ
لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ
وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝



987. The doctrine of personal responsibility again. We are fully responsible for our acts ourselves: we cannot transfer the consequences to some one else. Nor can any one vicariously atone for our sins. If people have honest doubts or differences about important questions of religion, they should not start futile disputes. All will be clear in the end. Our duty here is to maintain unity and discipline, and do the duty that comes to us.

988. Cf. ii. 30 and n., where I have translated "Khalifa" as "Vicerent", it being God's Plan to make Adam (as representing mankind) His vicerent on earth. In C. 1 I have construed the same word by the word "Agent." Another idea implied in "Khalifa" is that of "successor, heir, or inheritor," i. e., one who has the ultimate ownership after the present possessors, to whom a life-tenancy has been given by the owner, have passed away. In xv. 23 occurs the striking word "heirs" (warithin) as applied to God: "We give life and death, and We are the Heirs (or Inheritors)." The same idea occurs in iii. 180, where see n. 485. The translation here attempts to express both the ideas which I understand from the original.

INTRODUCTION SURA VII (*A'rāf*)

This Sūra is closely connected, both chronologically and in respect of the argument, with the previous Sūra. But it expounds the doctrine of revelation and man's spiritual history by illustrations from Adam onwards, through various Prophets, and the details of Moses's struggles, to the time of the Apostle Muḥammad, in whom God's revelation is completed.

Summary.

The note, "learn from the past," is struck from the very beginning. The opposition of Evil to Good is illustrated by the story of Adam and Iblīs. Arrogance leads to rebellion; the rebel is jealous and tempts the natural man, who is warned against deceit and all excess (vii. 1-31, and C. 83).

If the warning is not heeded, the future penalties are indicated, while the privileges and the bliss and peace of the righteous are shown in a picture of the Hereafter, as well as in the power and goodness of God in the world that we see around us (vii. 32-58, and C. 84).

The story of Noah and the Flood, and the stories of Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot, and Shu'aib, all point to the lesson that the Prophets were resisted and rejected, but truth triumphed in the end, and evil was humbled, for God's Plan never fails (vii. 59-99, and C. 85).

The story of Moses is told in greater detail, not only in his struggles with Pharaoh, but in his preparation for his mission, and his struggles with his own rebellious people. Even from the time of Moses the coming of the unlettered Apostle was foreshadowed (vii. 100-157, and C. 86).

But the people of Moses frequently lapsed from God's Law as promulgated to them, and transgressed God's Covenant, and they were scattered through the earth in sections (vii. 158-171, and C. 87).

The children of Adam have multiplied, but many of them have rejected truth and go by degrees to destruction in ways that they do not realise. The righteous listen to the Message of God, and serve Him in humility (vii. 172-206, and C. 88).

C. 83.—Revelation should ease the difficulties

(vii. 1-31.) Of heart and mind, for it tells

The story of man's spiritual past,
And teaches the end of good and evil.
Iblīs fell from jealousy and arrogance,
And Adam fell because he listened
To his deceit. But God did grant
In His Mercy gifts and guidance
To men, warned them against excess,
And taught them moderation and justice.

Sūra VII.

A'raf, or The Heights.

In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. **Alif, Lam, Mim, Şad.**⁹⁸⁹

2. **Book** revealed unto thee,—
So let thy heart be oppressed⁹⁹⁰
No more by any difficulty
On that account,—
That with it thou mightest
Warn (the erring) and teach
The Believers.

3. Follow (oh men!) the revelation
Given unto you from your Lord,
And follow not, as friends
Or protectors, other than Him.
Little it is ye understand.⁹⁹¹

4. **How** many towns have We
Destroyed (for their sins)?
Our punishment took them
On a sudden by night
Or while they slept
For their afternoon rest.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِالْأَلِفِ

۲- كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ
فَلَا يَكُنْ فِي صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِنْهُ
لِتُنْذِرَ بِهِ
وَذِكْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

۳- اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ
قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ

۴- وَكَمْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا
فَجَاءَهَا نُسْرَانَا بَيِّنَاتًا
أَوْ هُمْ قَا ضَالُونَ

989. This is a combination of four Abbreviated Letters. For Abbreviated Letters generally, see Appendix I (at the end of Sūra II). The combination here includes the three letters A. L. M., which occurred at the beginning of Sūra II, and are discussed in n. 23 to ii. 1.

The additional letter Şad occurs in combination here and in Sūra xix, and by itself at the beginning of S. xxxviii, and nowhere else. The factor common to S. vii, S. xix, and S. xxxviii, is that in each case the core of the Sūra consists in the stories (qisṣa) of the Prophets. In this Sūra we have the stories of Nuh, Hūd, Ḥālīq, Lot, Shu'aib, and Moses, leading up to Muḥammad, and in S. xxxviii the stories of David, Solomon, and Job similarly lead up to Muḥammad, occupying three out of the five sections. Sūra xix consists almost entirely of such stories. Can we understand Şad to stand for qisṣa, of which it is the most characteristic letter? In this Sūra vii we have also the spiritual history of mankind traced,—the Beginning, the Middle, and the End, which, as explained in n. 25, might be represented symbolically by A. L. M. If so, this Sūra, dealing with the Beginning, Middle, and End of man's spiritual story, and illustrating it by the stories of the Prophets, might well be represented symbolically by the letters *Alif, Lām, Mīm, Şad*. But no one can be dogmatic about these symbols. We must accept them as symbols with a mystic meaning.

990. *Heart*: in the original, *breast*. I have used the word most appropriate to the English idiom. The meaning is that Muṣṭafā is consoled for all the difficulties which he encountered in his mission, with the fact that he had clear guidance in the Book for his preaching.

991. This is added in order that men might not be puffed up with such little knowledge as they possessed, for there are great heights to be scaled in the spiritual kingdom.

5. When (thus) Our punishment
Took them, no cry
Could they utter but this :
"Indeed we did wrong."⁹⁹²
6. When shall we question
Those to whom Our Message
Was sent and those by whom⁹⁹³
We sent it.
7. We shall recount
Their whole story
With knowledge, for We
Were never absent
(At any time or place).⁹⁹⁴
8. The balance that day
Will be true (to a nicety) :
Those whose scale (of good)
Will be heavy, will prosper :
9. Those whose scale will be light,
Will find their souls
In perdition, for that they
Wrongfully rejected Our Signs.
10. It is We Who have
Placed you with authority
On earth, and provided
You therein with means
For the fulfilment of your life :⁹⁹⁵
Small are the thanks
That ye give !

هـ- فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوَاهُمْ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولُنَا
إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ○

٦- فَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ
وَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ○

٧- فَلَنَقُصِّعَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ بِرُوحِنَا
وَمَا كُنَّا غَائِبِينَ ○

٨- وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ لِمَنْ تَقَلَّتْ
مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ○

٩- وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ
خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَلْعَنُونَ ○

١٠- وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمُ فِيهَا مَعَاشٍ
فَايْلَا مَا تَشْكُرُونَ ○

992. The spiritual story of man begins with a prelude. Think of the towns and nations ruined by their iniquity. God gave them many opportunities, and sent them warners and teachers. But they arrogantly went on in their evil ways, till some dreadful calamity came like a thief in the night and wiped out their traces. In a warm climate the disturbance in the heat of the midday rest is even more than the disturbance at night. It was when the catastrophe came that the people realised their sins, but it was too late.

993. In the final reckoning, the warners and teachers will give evidence of their preaching the truth, and the wicked will themselves have to acknowledge the truth. We picture it like a court scene, when the story is related, but the Judge knows all, even more than the parties can tell.

994. God is never absent from any place or at any time, for Time and Place are relative conceptions for our limited natures, while He is the Absolute, independent of such relative conceptions.

995. That is, all the material things which are necessary to sustain, beautify, and refine life, as well as all those powers, faculties, and opportunities which are instrumental in bringing up life to a higher plane and preparing man for his high spiritual destiny.

SECTION 2.

11. **It is We Who created you**
And gave you shape;⁹⁹⁶
Then We bade the angels
Bow down to Adam, and they
Bowed down; not so Iblis;
He refused to be of those⁹⁹⁷
Who bow down.

۱۱- وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ نُفُورًا صَوْرًا كَمْ
 تَوَفَّلْنَا بِالسَّائِلَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ
 فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ
 لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ○

12. (God) said: "What prevented
 Thee from bowing down
 When I commanded thee?"
 He said: "I am better
 Than he: Thou didst create
 Me from fire, and him from clay."⁹⁹⁸

۱۲- قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ
 قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ
 خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ ○

13. (God) said: "Get thee down
 From this:⁹⁹⁹ it is not
 For thee to be arrogant
 Here: get out, for thou
 Art of the meanest (of creatures)."

۱۳- قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا
 فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا
 فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

14. He said: "Give me respite
 Till the day they are
 Raised up."

۱۴- قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي
 إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ○

15. (God) said: "Be thou
 Among those who have respite."¹⁰⁰⁰

۱۵- قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ ○

996. *Shāpe* or form must be interpreted not only to refer to the physical form, which changes day by day, but also the various forms or shapes which our ideal and spiritual existence may take from time to time according to our inner experiences: (Cf. lxxxii. 8. The original Form or Idea or Pattern, according to Plato's mystic doctrine as developed in his "Republic," may also be compared with the "names" or nature and quality of things, which God taught Adam: Q. ii. 31 and n. 48; and vi. 94, n. 916. It was after Adam (as standing for all mankind) had been so taught that the angels were asked to bow down to him, for, by God's grace, his status had actually been raised higher. Note the transition from "you" (plural) in the first clause to "Adam" in the second clause: Adam and mankind are synonymous: the plural is reverted to in vii, 14, 16-18.

997. Iblis not only refused to bow down: he refused to be of those who bowed down. In other words he arrogantly despised the angels who bowed down, as well as man to whom they bowed down; and he was in rebellion against God for not obeying His order. Arrogance, jealousy, and rebellion were his triple crime.

998. Notice the subtle wiles of Iblis: his egotism in putting himself above man, and his falsehood in ignoring the fact that God had not merely made man's body from clay, but had given him spiritual form,—in other words, had taught him the nature of things and raised him above the angels.

999. "This": the situation as it was then,—a rebellious creature impertinent to His Creator. At every step Iblis falls lower: arrogance, jealousy, disobedience, egotism and untruth.

1000. Are there others under respite? Yes, Iblis has a large army of wicked seducers, and those men who are their dupes. For though degradation takes effect at once, its appearance may be long delayed.

16. He said : " Because thou
Hast thrown me out ¹⁰⁰¹
Of the Way, lo ! I will
Lie in wait for them
On Thy Straight Way :
17. " Then will I assault them
From before them and behind them,
From their right and their left :
Nor wilt Thou find,
In most of them,
Gratitude (for Thy mercies). " ¹⁰⁰²
18. (God) said : " Get out
From this, disgraced
And expelled. If any
Of them follow thee,—
Hell will I fill
With you all.
19. " ¹⁰⁰³ O Adam ! dwell thou ¹⁰⁰³
And thy wife in the Garden,
and enjoy ¹⁰⁰⁴ (its good things)
As ye wish : but approach not
This tree, or ye run
Into harm and transgression."
20. Then began Satan ¹⁰⁰⁵ to whisper
Suggestions to them, bringing
Openly before their minds
All their shame ¹⁰⁰⁶

١٦- قَالَ فِيمَا أُغْوِيَنِي
لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

١٧- ثُمَّ لَا يَتَذَكَّرُ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَ
مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ
شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ○

١٨- قَالَ اخْرُجْ مِنْهَا مَذْذُومًا تَرْجُو
لَسَنَ يَبْعَثُ فِيهِمْ
لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ○

١٩- وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ
فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ
الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

٢٠- فَوَسَّسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ
لَهُمَا مَا وَرَءَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوَاقِحِهِمَا

1001. Another instance of Iblis's subtlety and falsehood. He waits till he gets the respite. Then he breaks out into a lie and impertinent defiance. The lie is in suggesting that God had thrown him out of the Way, in other words misled him ; whereas his own conduct was responsible for his degradation. The defiance is in his setting snares on the Straight Way to which God directs men. Iblis now falls a step lower than the five steps mentioned in n. 999. His sixth step is defiance.

1002. The assault of evil is from all sides. It takes advantage of every weak point, and sometimes even our good and generous sympathies are used to decoy us into the snares of evil. Man has every reason to be grateful to God for all His loving care, and yet man in his folly forgets his gratitude and does the very opposite of what he should do.

1003. Now the story turns to man. He was placed in a spiritual Garden of innocence and bliss, but it was God's Plan to give him a limited faculty of choice. All that he was forbidden to do was to approach the Tree of Evil, but he succumbed to Satan's suggestions.

1004. Enjoy : literally, " eat." Cf. the meaning of *ta'ama* in vi. 14, n. 847 and *akala* in v. 69, n. 776.

1005. The transition from the name " Iblis " to the name " Satan " is similar to that in ii. 36, where it is explained in n. 52.

1006. Our first parents as created by God (and this applies to all of us) were innocent in matters material as well as spiritual. They knew no evil. But the faculty of choice, which was given to them and which raised them above the angels, also implied that they had the capacity of evil, which by the training of their own will, they were to reject. They were warned of the danger. When they fell, they realised the evil. They were (and we are) still given the chance, in this life on a lower plane, to make good and recover the lost status of innocence and bliss.

That was hidden from them
(Before) : he said : " Your Lord
Only forbade you this tree,
Lest ye should become angels
Or such beings as live for ever."

21. And he swore to them
Both, that he was
Their sincere adviser.

22. So by deceit he brought about
Their fall : when they
Tasted of the tree,
Their shame became manifest
To them, and they began
To sew together the leaves
Of the Garden over their bodies.
And their Lord called
Unto them : " Did I not
Forbid you that tree,
And tell you that Satan
Was an avowed
Enemy unto you ? "

23. They said : " Our Lord !
We have wronged our own souls :
If Thou forgive us not
And bestow not upon us
Thy Mercy, we shall
Certainly be lost."

24. (God) said : " Get ye down,
With enmity between yourselves,
On earth will be your
dwelling-place
And your means of livelihood,—
For a time."

25. He said : " Therein shall ye
Live, and therein shall ye
Die ; but from it shall ye
Be taken out (at last). " ¹⁰⁰⁷

وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبِّي كَمَا عَنِ هَذِهِ
الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا
مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ٥

٢١- وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِيقِنٌ
الْمُصِدِّقِينَ ٥

٢٢- فَدَلَّهُمَا عَلَى عُرْوَةٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ
بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْآتُهُمَا
وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفْنَ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ ذَرَقِ
الْجَنَّةِ ٥

وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا
أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلَّ
لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ٥

٢٣- قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا
وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا
لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ٥

٢٤- قَالَ اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدَاوَةٌ
وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ
وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ٥

٢٥- قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ
وَمِنْهَا تُخْرَجُونَ ٥

1007. Cf. this whole passage about Adam with the passage in ii. 30-39, and with other passages in subsequent Sura's. In places the words are precisely the same, and yet the whole argument is different. In each case it exactly fits the context. In S. ii, the argument was about the origin of man. Here the argument is a prelude to his history on earth, and so it continues logically in the next section to address the Children of Adam, and goes on afterwards with the story of the various apostles that came to guide mankind. Truth is one, but its apt presentment in human words shows a different facet in different contexts.

SECTION 3.

26. Oh ye Children of Adam !

We have bestowed raiment ¹⁰⁰⁸

Upon you to cover

Your shame, as well as

Be an adornment to you.

But the raiment of

righteousness,—

That is the best.

Such are among the Signs

Of God, that ye

May celebrate His praise !

يٰۤاَيُّهَاۤ اٰدَمَ قَدْ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلٰیكَ لِبَاسًا

يُؤْوِیْ سَوَاتِیْكُمْ وَرِیْثًا

وَلِبَاسٍ تَمْلُوْنَ

ذٰلِكَ خَیْرٌ

ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اٰیٰتِ اللّٰهِ

لَعَلَّكُمْ یَذْكُرُوْنَ ۝

27. Oh ye Children of Adam !

Let not Satan seduce you,

In the same manner as ¹⁰⁰⁹

He got your parents out

Of the Garden, stripping them

Of their raiment, to expose

Their shame : for he

And his tribe watch you

From a position where ye

Cannot see them : We made

The Evil Ones friends

(Only) to those without Faith.

یٰۤاَيُّهَاۤ اٰدَمَ لَا یَفْتِنَکُمُ الشَّیْطٰنُ

کَمَاۤ اَخْرَجَ اٰبَیْکُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ

یُزَوِّجُ عَنْکُمُ اللِّبَاسَ کَمَاۤ اَلْبَسَکُمَا سَوَاتِیْهُمَا

اِنَّهٗ یَرٰکُمۡ هُوَ وَقَبِیْلُهُ مِنْ حَیْثُ لَا

تَرَوْنَهُمْ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّیْطٰنَ اَوْلِیَآءَ

لِلَّذِیْنَ لَا یُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝

28. When they do aught

That is shameful, they say :

"We found our fathers

Doing so"; and "God

Commanded us thus":

Say: "Nay, God never

وَاِذَا فَعَلُوْا فَاِجْشَمَۃٌ

قَالُوْا وَجَدْنَا اٰبَآءَنَا

وَاللّٰهُ اَمْرًاۤ اٰتٰیۤہُمْ ۚ قُلْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا یَهْدِی

1008. There is a double philosophy of clothes here, to correspond with the double signification of verse 20 above, as explained in n. 1006. Spiritually, God created man "bare and alone" (vi. 94): the soul in its naked purity and beauty knew no shame because it knew no guilt: after it was touched by guilt and soiled by evil, its thoughts and deeds became its clothing and adornments, good or bad, honest or meretricious, according to the inner motives which gave them colour. So in the case of the body: it is pure and beautiful, as long as it is not defiled by misuse: its clothing and ornaments may be good or meretricious, according to the motives in the mind and character: if good, they are the symbols of purity and beauty: but the best clothing and ornament we could have comes from righteousness, which covers the nakedness of sin, and adorns us with virtues. In secular literature, the philosophy of clothes is the theme of Carlyle's "*Sartor Resartus*," but it is strong meat to the novice in literature.

1009. That is, by fraud and deceit,—by putting you off your guard and telling lies. Adam's story here becomes an introduction to the later spiritual history of mankind: vii. 20 22. In the Garden Satan's deceit stripped off their raiment of honour and innocence. In this life on a lower plane he seeks to strip us of the raiment of righteousness. And he can take up positions on a vantage ground of worldly power or influence or riches, in which he and his confederates are not seen in their true colours. They may assume a fair-seeming disguise of disinterested friendship or high motives of patriotism or public spirit, or loyalty to ancestors, when beneath it there is nothing but spite and selfishness.

Commands what is shameful:
Do ye say of God
What ye know not ? "

29. Say : " My Lord hath commanded
Justice ; and that ye set
Your whole selves (to Him) ¹⁰¹⁰
At every time and place
Of prayer, and call upon Him,
Making your devotion sincere
As in His sight :
Such as He created you ¹⁰¹¹
In the beginning, so
Shall ye return."

30. Some He hath guided :
Others have (by their choice)
Deserved the loss of their way ; ¹⁰¹²
In that they took
The Evil Ones, in preference
To God, for their friends
And protectors, and think
That they receive guidance.

31. Oh Children of Adam !
Wear your beautiful apparel ¹⁰¹³
At every time and place
Of prayer: eat and drink :
But waste not by excess,
For God loveth not the wasters.

بِالْقِسْطِ
اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ○
۲- قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ
وَاقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ
عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ
وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ه
كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ ○

۳- قَرِيبًا هَدَىٰ وَقَرِيبًا حَقَّىٰ عَلَيْهِمُ
الظُّلُمَۃُ إِنَّهُمْ اتَّخَذُوا الشَّيَاطِينَ
أَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُم مُّهْتَدُونَ ○

۴- يٰٓبَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ
كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا
إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ○

1010. For *wa'j*, see ii. 112 and n. 114. Our devotion should be sincere, not as in other men's sight, but by presenting our whole selves, heart and soul, to God. Even so, it may not be enough; for the sight of our heart and soul may be faulty. We should call upon God to give us the light, by which our sincerity may commend itself to Him as true sincerity "as in His sight".

1011. Cf. vi. 94. Our sincerity should be real sincerity, as in God's sight; for when we return to Him, we shall be stripped of all pretence, even such self-deception as may satisfy us in this life.

1012. Guidance is for all. But in some it takes effect; in others the doors are closed against it, because they have taken Evil for their friend. If they have lost their way, they have richly deserved it; for they deliberately took their choice, even though, in their self-righteousness, they may think that their sin is their virtue, and that their Evil is their Good.

1013. *Beautiful apparel* : *sīnat* : adornments or apparel for beautiful living : construed to mean not only clothes that add grace to the wearer, but toilet and cleanliness, attention to hair, and other small personal details which no self-respecting man or woman ought to neglect when going solemnly even before a great human dignitary, if only out of respect for the dignity of the occasion. How much more important it is to attend to these details when we solemnly apply our minds to the Presence of God, though He is always present everywhere ! But the caution against excess applies : men must not go to prayer in silks or ornaments appropriate to women. Similarly sober food, good and wholesome, is not to be divorced from offices of religion ; only the caution against excess applies strictly. A dirty, unkempt, slovenly Faqir could not claim sanctity in Islam.

C. 84.—God has forbidden the things

(vii. 32-58). That are evil, not those that are good,
 For these were created for man's
 Enjoyment. The transgressors
 Are those who reject God's Signs.
 They will have no share in the Bliss
 Of the Hereafter. But the righteous
 Will dwell in Peace, and the Hope
 That was promised will be theirs.

SECTION 4.

32. Say : Who hath forbidden
 The beautiful (gifts) of God,¹⁰¹⁴
 Which He hath produced
 For His servants,
 And the things, clean and pure,
 Which He hath provided
 For sustenance?
 Say : They are, in the life
 Of this world, for those
 Who believe, (and) purely¹⁰¹⁵
 For them on the Day
 Of Judgment. Thus do We
 Explain the Signs in detail
 For those who understand.

۳۲۔ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ
 الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ
 وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ
 قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ
 الدُّنْيَا
 خَالِصَةٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
 كَذَلِكَ نَفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

33. Say : The things that my Lord
 Hath indeed forbidden are :¹⁰¹⁶
 Shameful deeds, whether open
 Or secret ; sins and trespasses
 Against truth or reason ; assigning
 Of partners to God, for which
 Ye are given no authority ;
 And saying things about God
 Of which ye have no knowledge.

۳۳۔ قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ
 مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ ۖ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ
 بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ
 مَا لَمْ يَنْزِلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا
 وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

1014. Asceticism often means the negation of art and beauty. It has no necessary sanctity attached to it.

1015. The beautiful and good things of life are really meant for, and should be the privilege of, those with faith in God. If they do not always have them in this life, and if there is sometimes the semblance of others having them who do not deserve them, let us at least consider the matter in another light. Our Faith in God's wisdom is unshaken and we know that these are but fleeting and mixed types of the things in the spiritual world. Their pure counterparts in the spiritual world will be only for those who proved, in all the trials of this world, that they had faith.

1016. The forbidden things are described in four categories : (1) what is shameful or unbecoming ; the sort of things which have also legal and social sanctions, not of a local but of a universal kind ; they may be called offences against society ; (2) sins against self and trespasses or excesses of every sort ; these are against truth and reason ; here would come in indiscipline, failure in doing intangible duties not clearly defined by law ; selfishness or self-aggrandisement, which may be condoned by custom and not punished by law, etc. ; (3) erecting fetishes or false gods ; this is treason against the true God ; and (4) corrupting religion by debasing superstitions, etc.

34. ~~No~~ Every People is a term¹⁰¹⁷
Appointed: when their term
Is reached, not an hour
Can they cause delay,
Nor (an hour) can they
Advance (in anticipation).

٣٤- وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ
لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً
وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ○

35. Oh ye Children of Adam !
Whenever there come to you
Apostles from amongst you,
Rehearsing My Signs unto you,—
Those who do right
And mend (their lives),—
On them shall be no fear
Nor shall they grieve.

٣٥- يَبْنَونَ أَزْوَاجًا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ
يَكْفُرُونَ عَنْكُمْ آلِهَتُكُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ
فَلَاحُوقٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا هُمْ يَخْزَوْنَ ○

36. But those who reject
Our Signs and treat them
With arrogance,—they
Are Companions of the Fire,
To dwell therein (for ever).

٣٦- وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَأَسْكَنُوا عَنْهَا أُولَئِكَ أُخْضِبَ الثَّوَابُ
هُمُ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ○

37. Who can do more wrong
Than one who invents
A lie against God
Or rejects His Signs ?
For such, their portion¹⁰¹⁸
Appointed must reach them
From the Book (of Decrees):
Until, when Our messengers
(Of death) arrive and take
Their souls, they say :
" Where are the things
That ye used to invoke
In preference to God ?"
They will reply, " They

٣٧- قَمِنَ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ
كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ
أُولَئِكَ يَتْلَوْنَ نَصِيحَتَهُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ مُسَلِّمِينَ يَقُولُ سَاحِرٌ
قَالُوا إِنَّا نَمْلِكُ مَا نَكْنُتُكُمْ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ
قَالُوا

1017. People : *umma*. I do not know whether "generation" would not be more appropriate here. If so, it would refer to the Time-Spirit, for it affects a whole number of people living contemporaneously, and while we deal grammatically with a group, we really have in mind the individuals composing the group. Anyway, the lesson is what is suggested in the following verses. There is only a limited time for an individual or for a group of people. If they do not make good during that time of probation, the chance is lost, and it cannot come again. We cannot retard or advance the march of time by a single hour or minute. ("Hour" in the text expresses an indefinite but short period of time.)

1018. It must not be supposed that the rebels against God would at once be cut off in this life for their sins. They will get the portion allotted to them, including the good things of life and the chance of repentance and reformation, during their probationary period on this earth. During that period they will have a full run. After that period expires, they will be called to account. They will themselves see that the false things in which they put their trust, were false, and they will confess their sin, but it will be too late.

Have left us in the lurch,"
And they will bear witness
Against themselves, that they
Had rejected God.

38. He will say: "Enter ye
In the company of
The Peoples who passed away
Before you—men and Jinns,—
Into the Fire. Every time
A new People enters,
It curses its sister-People
(That went before), until
They follow each other, all
Into the Fire. Saith the last
About the first: "Our Lord!
It is these that misled us:
So give them a double
Penalty in the Fire."
He will say: "Doubled ¹⁰¹⁹
For all": but this
Ye do not understand.

39. Then the first will say
To the last: "See then!
No advantage have ye
Over us; so taste ye
Of the Penalty for all
That ye did!" ¹⁰²⁰

SECTION 5.

40. ~~And~~ To those who reject
Our Signs and treat them
With arrogance, no opening
Will there be of the gates

صَلُّوا عَنَّا وَشَهِدُوا عَلٰى اَنْفُسِهِمْ
اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كٰفِرِيْنَ ۝

۳۸- قَالَ اَدْخُلُوا فِيْ اُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ مِنَ الْجِبْتِ وَالْاِنْسِ

فِي النَّارِ

كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ اُمَّةٌ لَعَنَتْ اُخْتَهَا

حَتّٰى اِذَا اُذْكُرُوا فِيْهَا جَمِيْعًا

قَالَتْ اَضْرَبْهُمْ رِزْوَالَهُمْ

رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ اَصْحٰبُنَا

فَاَتَيْنَهُمْ عَذَابًا يَضْعَفُوْنَ اَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمُ

اَلْحُلْمُ يَضْعَفُ وَلٰكِنْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝

۳۹- وَقَالَتْ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَضْرَبْهُمْ

فَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ

فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُوْنَ ۝

ع

۴۰- اِنَّ الدِّينَ كَذٰٓبٌ اٰتَيْنَا وَاَسْتَكْبَرُوْا

عَنَّا لَا تَفْتَحُ لَهُمْ اَبْوَابُ

1019. The earlier generations committed a double crime: (1) their own sins, (2) the bad example they set for those that followed. We are responsible not only for our own misdeeds, but for those which our example and our teaching to our juniors may induce them to commit. But it does not lie in the mouth of the juniors to ask for a double punishment for seniors: the motive is not justice, but pure spite, which is itself a sin. Farther, the later generations have to answer for two things: (1) their own sins, and (2) their failure to learn from the past, from the experiences of those who preceded them. They should have an advantage in this respect, being "in the foremost files of Time," but they did not learn. Thus there was nothing to choose between the earlier and later generations in the matter of guilt. But how few people understand this!

In vi. 160, we were told that good was rewarded tenfold, but evil was punished according to its guilt, in perfect justice. This verse is in no way inconsistent with it. Two crimes must have a double penalty. But we must understand "ten times" and "double" figuratively and not quantitatively.

1020. Wrong-doers have really no sense of honour towards each other. "Honour among thieves" is an exceptional, not an ordinary, experience. In real life, guilt and crime are apt to indulge in mean spite and bitter recriminations against accomplices.

Of heaven, nor will they
Enter the Garden, until
The camel can pass
Through the eye of the needle:
Such is Our reward
For those in sin.

النَّارَ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ
حَتَّى يَلْجِزَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ
وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ ○

41. For them there is
Hell, as a couch
(Below) and folds and folds
Of covering above: such
Is Our requital of those
Who do wrong.

٢١- لَهُمْ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ
وَمِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ
وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ○

42. But those who believe
And work righteousness,—
No burden do We place
On any soul, but that
Which it can bear,—
They will be Companions
Of the Garden, therein
To dwell (for ever).

٢٢- وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا
أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ○

43. And We shall remove
From their hearts any
Lurking sense of injury;—¹⁰²¹
Beneath them will be
Rivers flowing;—and they
Shall say: "Praise be to God,
Who hath guided us
To this (felicity): never
Could we have found
Guidance, had it not been
For the guidance of God:
Indeed it was the truth
That the Apostles of our Lord
Brought unto us." And they
Shall hear the cry:
"Behold! the Garden before you!

٢٣- وَنُزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غِلٍ
يَجْعَلُونَ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارَ
وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
الَّذِي هَدانا لهذا
وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ
لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدانا اللَّهُ
لَعَدَّ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ
وَلَوْ دَوَّالُ أَنْ تَكَلِّمَهُ الْجَنَّةُ

1021. A man who may have suffered or been disappointed may have a lurking sense of injury at the back of his mind, which may spoil his enjoyment on account of past memory intruding in the midst of felicity. In such cases memory itself is pain. Even sorrow is intensified by memory: as Tennyson says, "A sorrow's crown of sorrows is remembering happier things." But that is in this our imperfect life. In the perfect felicity of the righteous, all such feelings will be blotted out. No "heartaches" then and no memories of them! The clouds of the past will have dissolved in glorious light, and no past happiness will be comparable with the perfect happiness which will have then been attained. Nor will any sense of envy or shortcoming be possible in that perfect bliss.

Ye have been made ¹⁰²²
Its inheritors, for your
Deeds (of righteousness)."

44. The Companions of the Garden
Will call out to the Companions
Of the Fire: "We have
Indeed found the promises
Of our Lord to us true:
Have you also found
Your Lord's promises true? "
They shall say, "Yes "; but ¹⁰²³
A Crier shall proclaim
Between them: "The curse
Of God is on the wrong-doers ;—

45. "Those who would hinder (men)
From the path of God
And would seek in it
Something crooked : ¹⁰²⁴
They were those who
Denied the Hereafter."

46. Between them shall be
A veil, and on the Heights ¹⁰²⁵

أَوْرَثْنَا مُمُوكُمَا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ٥

٣٣ وَتَأَذَى أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ
أَنْ قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا رَبُّنَا حَقًّا
فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا
قَالُوا نَعَمْ
فَإِذَنْ مَرْجِعُونَ
يَبَيِّنُ لَهُمْ أَنْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ٥

٣٥- الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَيُرْغِبُونَ فِي عِوَجٍ
وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ كَافِرُونَ ٥

٣٦- وَبَيْنَهُمَا جَبَابٌ وَعَلَى الْأَعْرَافِ

1022. Jesus said : "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" : Matt. v. 5. Here we are told : blessed are the righteous, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. The stress here is on actual practical deeds of righteousness ; whether they find their rewards on earth or not is immaterial ; their attention is directed to an infinitely greater reward, the kingdom of heaven. In the Sermon on the Mount this is promised to the "poor in spirit" : Matt. v. 3.

1023. The Companions of the Fire can only answer a single word, "Yes," such is their state of misery. Even so, their voice is drowned in the voice of the Crier, who explains their state : they are in a state of curse, that is, deprivation of the grace and mercy of God. Such deprivation is the highest misery that souls can suffer.

1024. The unrighteous reflect their own crooked minds when the path of God is before them. Instead of going straight, they try to find something in it that suits their own crooked ideas. Frankly they have no faith in the final Goal, the Hereafter.

1025. This is a difficult passage, and Commentators have interpreted it in different ways. Three distinct schools of thought may be discerned in the interpretation. (1) One school thinks that the men on the Heights are angels, or such men of exalted spiritual dignity (e.g. the great apostles), as will be able to know the souls at sight as regards their spiritual worth : the Heights will be their exalted stations, from which they will welcome the righteous with a salutation of peace, even before the righteous have entered heaven ; the salutation of peace being itself an assurance of salvation to those whom they salute. (2) Another school of thought thinks that the men on the Heights are such souls as are not decidedly on the side of merit or decidedly on the side of sin, but evenly balanced on a partition between heaven and hell. Their case is yet to be decided, but their salutation to the righteous is a wishful salutation, because they hope for God's Mercy. (3) The third line of interpretation, with which I agree, is close to the first, with this exception, that the partition and the Heights are figurative. The higher souls will rejoice at the approaching salvation of the righteous.

Will be men
Who would know every one
By his marks: they will call
Out to the Companions
Of the Garden, "Peace on you":
They will not have entered,
But they will have
An assurance (thereof.)

رَجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ كُلًّا بِسِيمَاهُمْ
وَنَادُوا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ
أَنْ سَلِّمُوا عَلَيْنَا لَمْ يَدْخُلُوهَا
وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُونَ ○

47. When their eyes ¹⁰²⁶ shall be turned
Towards the Companions
Of the Fire, they will say:
"Our Lord! send us not
To the company
Of the wrong-doers."

۴۷- وَإِذَا صُرِفَتْ أَبْصَارُهُمْ
تِلْقَاءَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا
مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

SECTION 6.

48. The men on the Heights
Will call to certain men
Whom they will know
From their marks, saying: ¹⁰²⁷
"Of what profit to you
Were your hoards and your
Arrogant ways?"

۴۸- وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَابِ رَجَالًا
يَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ
قَالُوا مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ
وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ○

49. "Behold! are these not
The men whom you swore
That God with His Mercy
Would never bless?
Enter ye the Garden:
No fear shall be on you,
Nor shall ye grieve."

۴۹- أَهَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمْتُمْ
لَا يَبْلُغُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ
أَدْخِلُوا الْجَنَّةَ
لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ○

50. The Companions of the Fire
Will call to the Companions
Of the Garden: "Pour down
To us water or anything

۵۰- وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ
أَنْ أَوْضِعُوا عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ أَوْ مِمَّا

1026. *Their eyes*: according to interpretation (2) of the last note, "their" would refer to the people whose fate has not yet been decided, and the speech would be theirs; according to interpretations (1) and (3) in that note, "their" would refer to the Companions of the Garden, who would realise the terrible nature of hell, and express their horror of it. I prefer the latter. Then the mention of the "men on the Heights" and their speech in verse 48 comes in naturally as a different kind of speech from a different kind of men.

1027. This speech is in three parts: (1) the last lines of this verse are addressed to the Companions of the Fire, reminding them (as a bench of judges might speak to a prisoner) of the futility of their wealth and riches and arrogance in their earthly life; (2) the second part, in the first half of verse 49, recalls to their minds how false was their contempt of the good but lowly men who are now to be the inheritors of heaven; and (3) the latter part of verse 49, "enter ye the Garden" is addressed to the Blessed, to give them a welcome to their state of felicity.

That God doth provide
For your sustenance."
They will say: "Both
These things hath God forbidden
To those who rejected Him ;—¹⁰²⁸

رَزَقَكُمْ اللَّهُ ۖ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ
عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ۝

51. "Such as took their religion
To be mere amusement
And play, and were deceived
By the life of the world."
That day shall We forget them ¹⁰²⁹
As they forgot the meeting
Of this day of theirs,
And as they were wont
To reject Our Signs.

۝-الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا
وَلَعِبًا وَغَرَّتْهُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا
فَالْيَوْمَ نَنْسَاهُمْ
كَمَا نَسُوا لِقَاءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هَذَا ۝
وَمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ ۝

52. For We had certainly
Sent unto them a Book,
Based on knowledge,
Which We explained
In detail,—a guide
And a mercy
To all who believe.

۝-وَلَقَدْ جِئْنَاهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ
فَضَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ هَدًى
وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝

53. Do they just wait
For the final fulfilment
Of the event? On the day
The event is finally fulfilled, ¹⁰³⁰
Those who disregarded it
Before will say: "The apostles
Of our Lord did indeed
Bring true (tidings). Have we
No intercessors now to intercede
On our behalf? Or could we

۝-هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا تَأْوِيلَهُ
يَوْمَ يَأْتِي تَأْوِيلَهُ
يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ نَسُوهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ
لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا بِالْحَقِّ ۖ قَالُوا
مِنْ شَفَعَاءَ فَيَشْفَعُوا لَنَا ۖ أَوْ

1028. The Companions of the Fire will thirst for water and not get it, and for sustenance which will not be theirs, while the Companions of the Garden will have the refreshing rain of God's Mercy and the crystal waters of the springs and rivers of God's pleasure, and they will enjoy the bliss of God's Countenance, which will be their supreme nourishment and the fruit of their life of probation and seeking. These things will not be transferable. Cf. also xxxvii. 41-47, 62-67.

1029. "Forgetfulness" may be involuntary, from a defect of memory, or figuratively, a deliberate turning away from, or ignoring of, something we do not want, as when we say in an argument, "you conveniently forget that so-and-so is so and so." Here the latter kind is meant. If men deliberately ignored the Hereafter in spite of warnings, can they expect to be received by God, Whom they themselves rejected?

1030. If those without Faith want to wait and see what happens in the Hereafter, they will indeed learn the truth, but it will be too late for them to profit by it then. All the false ideals and false gods which they put their trust upon will leave them in the lurch. If they thought that the goodness or greatness of others would help them, they will be undeceived on the day when their personal responsibility will be enforced. There will be no salvation except on their own record. How they will then wish that they had another chance! But their chance will be gone.

Be sent back ? Then should we
Behave differently from our
Behaviour in the past,"
In fact they will have lost
Their souls, and the things
They invented will leave
Them in the lurch.

SECTION 7.

- 54 Your Guardian-Lord
Is God, Who created
The heavens and the earth ¹⁰³¹
In six Days, and is firmly
Established on the Throne ¹⁰³²
(Of authority) : He draweth
The night as a veil
O'er the day, each seeking
The other in rapid succession :
He created the sun,
The moon, and the stars,
(All) governed by laws
Under His Command.
Is it not His to create
And to govern ? Blessed
Be God, the Cherisher
And Sustainer of the Worlds !

55. Call on your Lord
With humility and in private : ¹⁰³³

رَبِّكَ فَتَعْمَلْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ
فَدَّخَسْنَا أُنْفُسَهُمْ
وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ
مِمَّا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ۝

۝۴۴ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ
ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ
يُعْشَى الْيَلِ الْفَاحِ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا
وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ
مُسَخَّرَاتٌ بِأَمْرِهِ
إِلَّاهُ الْخَلْقِ وَالْآمُرِ
تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝
۝۴۵ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً

1031. A sublime verse, comparable to the Throne Verse, ii. 255. The Creation in *six Days* is of course metaphorical. In xiv. 14, the "Days of God" refer not so much to time as to the growth in us of a spiritual sense, a sense of sin and a sense of God's Mercy. In xxii. 47 we are told that a Day in the sight of God is *like* a thousand years of our reckoning, and in lxx. 4 the comparison is with 50,000 of our years. In the history of our material earth, we may reckon six great epochs of evolution. The significance of the figure *six* will be discussed in connection with xlii. 9-12, where the matter is referred to in more detail.

1032. Throne ('*arsh*) is of course metaphorical, a symbol of authority, power, and vigilance, as *Kursi* (seat, throne), was in ii. 255. *Kursi* perhaps refers to majesty, while '*arsh* refers to power ; and the slightly different shades of meaning throw light on the two passages. Here, we are told of the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days. But lest we should be obsessed with the Jewish idea that God *rested* on the seventh day, we are told that the Creation was but a prelude to God's work : for His authority is exercised constantly by the laws which He establishes and enforces in all parts of His Creation. The beautiful imagery of night and day seeking out each other in rapid succession is still further enforced in the Arabic by the double accusative of the verb *yaghsht*, showing the mutual interactions of the day and the night, each covering the other in turn. The heavenly bodies show an order which is evidence of His *constant* care and government. Not only that, but it is only He Who creates, maintains, and governs, and no one else.

1033. In prayer, we must avoid any arrogance or show or loudness, or vanity of requests or words. If excess is condemned in all things, it is specially worthy of condemnation when we go humbly before our Lord,—we poor creatures before the Omnipotent Who knoweth all.

For God loveth not
Those who trespass beyond
bounds.

56. Do no mischief on the earth,
After it hath been ¹⁰⁸⁴
Set in order, but call
On Him with fear ¹⁰⁸⁵
And longing (in your hearts):
For the Mercy of God
Is (always) near
To those who do right.

57. It is He who sendeth
The Winds like heralds
Of glad tidings, going before ¹⁰⁸⁶
His Mercy: when they have
Carried the heavy-laden
Clouds, We drive them
To a land that is dead,
Make rain to descend thereon,
And produce every kind
Of harvest therewith: thus
Shall We raise up the dead:
Perchance ye may understand.

58. From the land that is clean
And good, by the Will
Of its Cherisher, springs up
Produce, (rich) after its kind: ¹⁰⁸⁷

إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ٥٦

٥٦- وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا
وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ
قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ٥٧

٥٧- وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ
بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَكَلَتِ السَّحَابُ ثِقَالًا سَفَعْنَاهُ
لِبَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَأَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَاءَ فَأَخْرَجْنَا
بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
كَذَٰلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ٥٨

٥٨- وَالْبَلَدُ الظَّالِمُ
يُخْرِجُ نَبَاتَهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ

1034. The man who prays with humility and earnestness finds the ground prepared by God for his spiritual advancement. It is all set in order, and cleared of weeds. He does not, like the wicked, upset that order, to introduce evil or mischief into it.

1035. *Fear and longing*: the fear of God is really a fear lest we should diverge from His Will, or do anything which would not be pleasing to Him: unlike ordinary fear, it therefore brings us nearer to God, and in fact nourishes our longing and desire for Him.

1036. The Parable is complete in its triple significance. (1) In the physical world the winds go like heralds of glad tidings; they are the advance-guard, behind which is coming a great army of winds driving heavily laden clouds before it; the wise Providence of God is their General, who directs them towards a parched land, on which the clouds deliver their gladdening showers of mercy, which convert the dead land into a living, fertile, and beautiful land bearing a rich harvest. (2) In the spiritual world, the winds are the great motive forces in the mind of man, or in the world around him, that bring the clouds or instruments of God's Mercy, which descend and fertilise souls hitherto spiritually dead. (3) If we can see or experience such things in our life here below, can we doubt the resurrection of our souls after we die here?

1037. The triple parable explained in the last note is here continued. (1) In the physical world, the fertilising showers of rain yield a rich harvest on good soil, but bad soil yields little or nothing. (2) In the spiritual world, also, God's Mercies evoke no response in some souls which have chosen evil. (3) In the final reckoning, though all will be raised, not all will achieve the fulfilment of their lives.

But from the land that is
Bad, springs up nothing
But that which is niggardly :
Thus do we explain the Signs
By various (symbols) to those
Who are grateful.¹⁰³⁸

وَالَّذِي خَبَتْ لَا يُخْرُجُهُ إِلَّا كَيْدًا
كَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ
يَشْكُرُونَ ۝

C. 85.—Noah's warning was rejected by his
(vii. 59-99.) Generation, and they were destroyed
In the Flood. Hūd was defied
By his own people 'Ād, but they were
Swept away by a terrible blast.
Their successors, the Thamūd, were puffed up
With pride and injustice, but behold !
An earthquake buried them for their sins
After Šālīḥ had warned them from God.
With a rain of brimstone and fire
Were overwhelmed the Cities of the Plain
For their unexampled lusts, against which
Lot did warn them. The people of Midian
Were given to mischief and fraud : Shu'aib
Did warn them, but they heeded not,
And perished in an earthquake.
God's punishment is sure for wickedness and sin.

SECTION 8.

59. ~~We~~ e sent Noah to his
people.¹⁰³⁹
He said : " Oh my people !
Worship God ! ye have
No other god but Him.
I fear for you the Punishment
Of a dreadful Day !

هـ-لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ
فَقَالَ يَقُومُوا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ
مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرِهِ إِنَِّّي أَخَافُ
عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝

60. The leaders of his people
Said : " Ah ! We see thee
Evidently wandering (in mind). "

هـ-قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ
إِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ۝

1038. *Those who are grateful* are those who joyfully receive God's Message, and respond to it by deeds of holiness and righteousness.

1039. The story of Noah in greater detail will be found in xi. 25-49. Here the scheme is to tell briefly the stories of some of the Prophets between Noah and Moses, and lead up thus to a lesson for the contemporaries of the Apostle Muḥammad himself. When Noah attacked the wickedness of his generation, he was laughed at for a madman, for he mentioned the Great Day to come in the Hereafter. God's retribution came soon afterwards—the great Flood, in which his unbelieving people were drowned, but he and those who believed in him and came into the Ark were saved.

61. He said : " Oh my people !
No wandering is there
In my (mind) : on the contrary
I am an apostle from
The Lord and Cherisher
Of the Worlds !
62. " I but fulfil towards you
The duties of my Lord's mission :
Sincere is my advice to you,
And I know from God
Something that ye know not.
63. " Do ye wonder that
There hath come to you
A message from your Lord,
Through a man of your own
People, to warn you,—
So that ye may fear God
And receive His Mercy ? "
64. But they rejected him,
And We delivered him,
And those with him,
In the Ark :
But We overwhelmed
In the Flood those
Who rejected Our Signs.
They were indeed
A blind people !

SECTION 9.

65. ~~And~~ To the 'Ad people,¹⁰⁴⁰
(We sent) Hūd, one

١٠٤٠ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي ضَلَالَةٌ
وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ
مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

١٠٤١ اٰتٰىكُم رِسَالَتِي رَقِيًّا
وَ اَنْصَحُكُمْ
وَ اَحْلُمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

١٠٤٢ اَوْ عَجِبْتُمْ اَنْ جَاءَكُمْ
ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ
وَلِتَسْتَقْبُواْ لَعْنَكُمْ ثُمَّ تَكْفُرُونَ ۝

١٠٤٣ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَتٰىجِبْنُهُ
وَ الَّذِيْنَ مَعَهُ فِى الْفُلَاكِ
وَ اَعْرَفْنَا الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِآيٰتِنَا
اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمًا عٰمِيْنَ ۝

١٠٤٤ وَاِلٰى عَادِ اٰخَاهُمْ هٰوْدًا

1040. The 'Ad people, with their prophet Hūd, are mentioned in many places. See especially xxvi. 123-140, and xli. 21-26. Their story belongs to Arabian tradition. Their eponymous ancestor 'Ad was fourth in generation from Noah, having been a son of 'Aus, the son of Aram, the son of Šām, the son of Noah. They occupied a large tract of country in Southern Arabia, extending from 'Ummān at the mouth of the Persian Gulf to Ḥaḍramaut and Yemen at the southern end of the Red Sea. The people were tall in stature and were great builders. Probably the long, winding tracts of sands (aḥqāf) in their dominions (xli. 21) were irrigated with canals. They forsook the true God, and oppressed their people. A three years' famine visited them, but yet they took no warning. At length a terrible blast of wind destroyed them and their land, but a remnant, known as the second 'Ad or the Thamād (see below) were saved, and afterwards suffered a similar fate for their sins.

The tomb of the Prophet Hūd (*qabr Nabī Hūd*) is still traditionally shown in Ḥaḍramaut; latitude 16° N. and longitude 49½° E., about 90 miles north of Mukalla. There are ruins and inscriptions in the neighbourhood. There is an annual pilgrimage to it in the month of Rajab. See "Ḥaḍramaut, Some of its Mysteries Unveiled," by D. van der Meulen and H. von Wissmann, Leyden, 1932.

Of their (own) brethren :
He said: "Oh my people!
Worship God! ye have
No other god but Him.
Will ye not fear (God)?"

66. The leaders of the unbelievers
Among his people said:
"Ah! we see thou art
An imbecile!" and "We think
Thou art a liar!"

67. He said: "Oh my people!
I am no imbecile, but
I am an apostle from
The Lord and Cherisher
Of the Worlds!

68. "I but fulfil towards you
The duties of my Lord's mission:
I am to you a sincere
And trustworthy adviser.

69. "Do ye wonder that
There hath come to you
A message from your Lord
Through a man of your own
People, to warn you?
Celebrate (God's goodness)
In that He made you
Inheritors after the people
Of Noah, and gave you
A stature tall among the nations.
Call in remembrance
The benefits (ye have received)
From God: that so
Ye may prosper."

70. They said: "Comest thou
To us, that we may worship
God alone, and give up
The cult of our fathers?
Bring us what thou
Threatenest us with,
If so be that thou
Tellest the truth!"

قَالَ يَقُولُوا عِبُوا اللَّهَ
مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ
أَكْفَارًا تَكْفُرُونَ ○

٦٦- قَالَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ
إِنَّا لَنَرُكَ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ
وَإِنَّا لَنَحْسَبُكَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ○

٦٧- قَالَ يَقُولُوا لَيْسَ بِي سَفَاهَةٌ
وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ
مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ○

٦٨- أَتَأْتِيكُمْ بِكُرْهٍ رَسُولًا
وَأَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ ○

٦٩- أَوْ عَجِبْتُمْ أَنْ جَاءَكُمْ
ذِكْرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْكُمْ
لِيُنْذِرَكُمْ
وَأَذْكُرُوا الْآيَاتِ الَّتِي جَعَلَكُمْ
خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ
وَأَذْكُرُوا فِي الْخَلْقِ بَصْنَةً
فَإِذْكُرُوا الْآيَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ○

٧٠- قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ
وَنَذَرَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ آبَاءَهُمْ
فَأْتِنَاهُمْ بِمَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِينَ ○

71. He said: " Punishment
And wrath have already¹⁰⁴¹
Come upon you from your Lord:
Dispute ye with me
Over names which ye¹⁰⁴²
Have devised—ye
And your fathers,—
Without authority from God?
Then wait: I am
Amongst you, also waiting."

١- قَالَ قَدْ وَقَعَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ
وَغَضَبٌ أَتُجَادِلُونَنِي فِي أَسْمَاءٍ سَخِطْتُمَا
أَنْتُمَا وَآبَاؤُكُمْ
مَا تَنْكُلُ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ فَانظُرُوا
إِلَى مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَظَرِينَ ٥

72. We saved him and those
Who adhered to him,
By Our Mercy, and We
Cut off the roots of those
Who rejected Our Signs
And did not believe.

٢- فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا
وَقَطَعْنَا دَابِرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَمَا كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ٥

SECTION 10.

73. ~~No~~ to the Thamūd people¹⁰⁴³
(We sent) Šālih, one

٣- وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ طَالُوتًا

1041. The past tense may be understood in three ways. (1) A terrible famine had already afflicted the 'Ad as a warning before they were overwhelmed in the final blast of hot wind (see the last note). (2) The terrible insolence and sin into which they had fallen was itself a punishment. (3) The prophetic past is used, as much as to say: "Behold! I see a dreadful calamity: it is already on you!"

1042. Why dispute over names and imaginary gods, the inventions of your minds? Come to realities. If you ask for the punishment and are waiting in insolent defiance, what can I do but also wait?—in fear and trembling for you, for I know that God's punishment is sure!

1043. The Thamūd people were the successors to the culture and civilisation of the 'Ad people, for whom see n. 1040 and vii. 65 above. They were cousins to the 'Ad, apparently a younger branch of the same race. Their story also belongs to Arabian tradition, according to which their eponymous ancestor Thamūd was a son of 'Abir (a brother of Aram), the son of Sām, the son of Noah. Their seat was in the north-west corner of Arabia (Arabia Petræa), between Medina and Syria. It included both rocky country (hijr, xv. 80), and the spacious fertile valley (Wādī) and plains country of Qurā, which begins just north of the City of Medina and is traversed by the Hijāz Railway. When the holy Apostle in the 9th year of the Hijra led his expedition to Tabūk (about 400 miles north of Medina) against the Roman forces, on a reported Roman invasion from Syria, he and his men came across the archaeological remains of the Thamūd. The recently excavated rock city of Petra, near Ma'an, may go back to the Thamūd, though its architecture has many features connecting it with Egyptian and Græco-Roman culture overlaying what is called by European writers Nabatæan culture. Who were the Nabatæans? They were an old Arab tribe which played a considerable part in history after they came into conflict with Antigonus I in 312 B.C. Their capital was Petra, but they extended their territory right up to the Euphrates. In 85 B.C. they were lords of Damascus under their king Hāritha (Aretas of Roman history). For some time they were allies of the Roman Empire and held the Red Sea littoral. The Emperor Trajan reduced them and annexed their territory in A.D. 105. The Nabatæans succeeded the Thamūd of Arabian tradition. The Thamūd are mentioned by name in an inscription of the Assyrian King Sargon, dated 715 B.C., as a people of Eastern and Central Arabia (*Encyclopædia of Islam*). See also Appendix IX to S. xxvi.

With the advance of material civilisation, the Thamūd people became godless and arrogant, and were destroyed by an earthquake. Their prophet and warner was Šālih, and the crisis in their history is connected with the story of a wonderful she-camel; see next note.

Of their own brethren :
 He said : " Oh my people !
 Worship God ; ye have
 No other god but Him.
 Now hath come unto you
 A clear (Sign) from your Lord !
 This she-camel of God
 Is a Sign unto you :
 So leave her to graze
 In God's earth, and let her
 Come to no harm,
 Or ye shall be seized
 With a grievous punishment.¹⁰⁴⁴

74. " And remember how He
 Made you inheritors
 After the 'Ad people
 And gave you habitations
 In the land : ye build
 For yourselves palaces and castles
 In (open) plains, and carve out
 Homes in the mountains ;
 So bring to remembrance
 The benefits (ye have received)
 From God, and refrain
 From evil and mischief
 On the 'earth."

75. The leaders of the arrogant
 Party among his people said

قَالَ يَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
 مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ
 قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنْ بَيْنَتِهِ
 مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
 هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ
 فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أََرْضِ اللَّهِ
 وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسَوْءٍ
 فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابُ الْإِلِيمِ ○

٧٤- وَاذْكُرُوا الْإِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ
 مِنْ بَعْدِ عَادٍ
 وَبَوَّأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْ سُهُولِهَا قُصُورًا
 وَتَتَّخِذُونَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوتًا
 فَادْكُرُوا الْآيَةَ اللَّهِ
 وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ○

٧٥- قَالَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا

1044. The story of this wonderful she-camel, that was a Sign to the Thamūd, is variously told in tradition. We need not follow the various versions in the traditional story. What we are told in the Qurān is : that (1) she was a Sign or Symbol, which the prophet Ṣāliḥ used for a warning to the haughty oppressors of the poor ; (2) there was scarcity of water, and the arrogant or privileged classes tried to prevent the access of the poor or their cattle to the springs, while Ṣāliḥ intervened on their behalf (xxvi. 155, liv. 28) ; (3) like water, pasture was considered a free gift of nature, in this spacious earth of God (vii. 73), but the arrogant ones tried to monopolise the pasture also ; (4) this particular she-camel was made a test case (liv. 27) to see if the arrogant ones would come to reason ; (5) the arrogant ones, instead of yielding to the reasonable rights of the people, hamstrung the poor she-camel and slew her, probably secretly (xci. 14, liv. 29) ; the cup of their iniquities was full, and the Thamūd people were destroyed by a dreadful earthquake, which threw them prone on the ground and buried them with their houses and their fine buildings.

To those who were reckoned
Powerless—those among them ¹⁰⁸⁴
Who believed: "Know ye
Indeed that Ṣāliḥ is
An apostle from his Lord?"
They said: "We do indeed
Believe in the revelation ¹⁰⁴⁶
Which hath been sent
Through him."

76. The arrogant party said:
"For our part, we reject
What ye believe in."

77. Then they ham-strung
The she-camel, and insolently
Defied the order of their Lord,
Saying: "Oh Ṣāliḥ! bring about
Thy threats, if thou art
An apostle (of God)!"

78. So the earthquake took them ¹⁰⁴⁷
Unawares, and they lay
Prostrate in their homes
In the morning!

مِنْ قَوْمِهِ
الَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعُّوا
لَيْسَ مِنْهُمْ
أَتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ صَالِحًا مُرْسَلٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ
قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلَ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ

٤٠٠ قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا
إِنَّا بِالذِّكْرِ آمَنَتُمْ بِهِ كَفِرُونَ

٤٠١ فَعَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ
وَقَالُوا يُصْلِحُ امْرَأَتَنَا بِمَا نَعْبُدُ
إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

٤٠٢ فَأَخَذَ اللَّهُمُ الرِّجْفَةَ
فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جُثِينَ

1045. As usually happens in such cases, the Believers were the lowly and the humble, and the oppressors were the arrogant, who in selfishly keeping back nature's gifts (which are God's gifts) from the people, were deaf to the dictates of justice and kindness. Ṣāliḥ took the side of the unprivileged, and was therefore himself attacked.

1046. Notice the relation between the question and the answer. The godless chiefs wanted to discredit Ṣāliḥ, and put a personal question, as much as to say, "Is he not a liar?" The Believers took back the issue to the higher plane, as much as to say, "We know he is a man of God, but look at the justice for which he is making a stand: to resist it is to resist God." The answer of the godless was to reject God in words, and in action to commit a further act of cruelty and injustice in ham-stringing and killing the she-camel, at the same time hurling defiance at Ṣāliḥ and his God.

1047. The retribution was not long delayed. A terrible earthquake came and buried the people and destroyed their boasted civilization. The calamity must have been fairly extensive in area and intense in the terror it inspired, for it is described (liv, 31) as a "single mighty blast" (*gaïstan wāḥidatan*), the sort of terror-inspiring noise which accompanies all big earthquakes.

79. So Ṣāliḥ left them,¹⁰⁴⁸
Saying: "Oh my people!
I did indeed convey to you
The message for which
I was sent by my Lord:
I gave you good counsel,
But ye love not good counsellors!"

٤٩- فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يٰ قَوْمِ
لَقَدْ اَنْتُمْ كُمْرٌ سَالَةٌ رَّبِّي
وَتَصْنَعْتُمْ لَكُمْ
وَلَكِنْ لَا تُحِبُّوْنَ التَّصْحِيْنَ ۝

80. We also (sent) Lūṭ: ¹⁰⁴⁹
He said to his people:
"Do ye commit lewdness
Such as no people
In creation (ever) committed
Before you?"

٥٠- وَلُوْطًا اِذْ قَالَ يٰ قَوْمِ
اَتَاْتُوْنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ
اَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝

81. "For ye practise your lusts
On men in preference
To women: ye are indeed
A people transgressing
Beyond bounds."

٥١- اِنَّكُمْ لَتَاْتُوْنَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ
دُوْنِ النِّسَاءِ
بَلْ اَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُوْنَ ۝

82. And his people gave
No answer but this:
They said, "Drive them out
Of your city: these are

٥٢- وَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ اِلَّا
اَنْ قَالُوْا اَخْرِجُوْهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكُمْ

1048. Ṣāliḥ was saved by God's mercy as a just and righteous man. His speech here may be either a parting warning, or it may be a soliloquy lamenting the destruction of his people for their sin and folly.

1049. Lūṭ is the Lot of the English Bible. His story is biblical, but freed from some shameful features which are a blot on the biblical narrative. He was a nephew of Abraham, and was sent as an apostle and warner to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, cities utterly destroyed for their unspeakable sins. They cannot be exactly located, but it may be supposed that they were somewhere in the plain east of the Dead Sea. The story of their destruction is told in the 19th chapter of Genesis. Two angels in the shape of handsome young men came to Lot in the evening and became his guests by night. The inhabitants of Sodom in their lust for unnatural crime invaded Lot's house but were repulsed. In the morning, the angels warned Lot to escape with his family. "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." (Gen. xix. 24-26.)

Note that Lot's people are the people to whom he is sent on a mission. He was not one of their own brethren, as was Ṣāliḥ or Shu'aib.

Indeed men who want
To be clean and pure! " 1050

83. But we saved him
And his family, except
His wife: she was
Of those who lagged behind. 1051

84. And we rained down on them
A shower (of brimstone): 1052
Then see what was the end
Of those who indulged
In sin and crime!

SECTION 11.

85. **Q**uo the Madyan people 1053

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا لَسِيْطَطْرُوْنَ

۸۳- مَا جَعَلْنَاهُ وَاَهْلَكَ اِلَّا اِمْرَاَتًا ۚ

كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغٰرِبِيْنَ

۸۴- وَاَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ قَطْرًا ۚ

فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۝

۸۵- وَاِلٰى مَدْيَنَ

1050. An instance of the withering sarcasm that hardened sinners use against the righteous. They wound with words, and follow up the insult with deeds of injustice, thinking that they would bring the righteous into disgrace. But God looks after His own, and in the end, the wicked themselves are overthrown when the cup of their iniquity is full.

1051. In the biblical narrative she looks back, a physical act (see n. 1049): here she is a type of those who lag behind, i.e. whose mental and moral attitude, in spite of their association with the righteous, is to hark back to the glitter of wickedness and sin. The righteous should have one sole objective, the Way of God. They should not look behind, nor yet to the right or the left.

1052. The shower is expressly stated in Q. xi. 82 to have been of stones. In xv. 73-74, we are told that there was a terrible blast or noise (*ṣaiḥat*) in addition to the shower of stones. Taking these passages into consideration along with Gen. xix 24, (see n. 1049 above), I think it is legitimate to translate: "a shower of brimstone."

1053. "Madyan" may be identified with "Midian." Midian and the Midianites are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, though the particular incident here mentioned belongs to Arab rather than to Jewish tradition. The Midianites were of Arab race, though, as neighbours of the Canaanites, they probably intermixed with them. They were a wandering tribe; it was Midianite merchants to whom Joseph was sold into slavery, and who took him to Egypt. Their principal territory in the time of Moses was in the north-east of the Sinai Peninsula, and east of the Amalekites. Under Moses the Israelites waged a war of extermination against them: they slew the kings of Midian, slaughtered all the males, burnt their cities and castles, and captured their cattle (Num. xxxi. 7-11). This sounds like total extermination. Yet a few generations afterwards, they were so powerful that the Israelites for their sins were delivered into the captivity of the Midianites for seven years; both the Midianites and their camels were without number; and the Israelites hid from them in "dens, ...caves, and strongholds" (Judges vii. 1-6). Gideon destroyed them again, (Judges vii. 1-25), say about two centuries after Moses. As the decisive battle was near the hill of Moreh, not far south of Mount Tabor, we may localise the Midianites on this occasion in the northern parts of the Jordan valley, at least 200 miles north of the Sinai Peninsula.

This and the previous destruction under Moses were local, and mention no towns of Midian. In later times there was a town of Madyan on the east side of the Gulf of 'Aqaba. It is mentioned in Josephus, Eusebius, and Ptolemy; (*Encyclopædia of Islam*). Then it disappears from geography. In Muslim times it was a revived town with quite a different kind of population, but it never flourished. The Midianites disappeared from history.

We sent Shu'aib,¹⁰⁵⁴ one
Of their own brethren : he said :
" Oh my people ! worship God ;
Ye have no other god
But Him. Now hath come
Unto you a clear (Sign)
From your Lord ! Give just
Measure and weight, nor withhold
From the people the things
That are their due ; and do
No mischief on the earth
After it has been set
In order : that will be best
For you, if ye have Faith.

86. " And squat not on every road,
Breathing threats, hindering
From the path of God
Those who believe in Him,
And seeking in it
Something crooked ;
But remember how ye were
Little, and He gave you increase.
And hold in your mind's eye
What was the end

أَحَاثُمْ شُعَيْبًا
قَالَ لِيَقُومُوا عِبَادُوا اللَّهَ
مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ
قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ
فَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ
وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَقْسِدُوا
فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا
ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ
٨٦- وَلَا تَقْعُدُوا بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ تُوعِدُونَ
وَتَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
مَنْ آمَنَ بِهِ وَتَبْغُوزُهَا عِوَجًا
وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ كُنْتُمْ قَلِيلًا لَكَرَّكُمْ
وَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ

1054. Shu'aib belongs to Arab rather than to Jewish tradition, to which he is unknown. His identification with Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, has no warrant, and I reject it. There is no similarity either in names or incidents, and there are chronological difficulties (see n. 1064 below). If, as the Commentators tell us, Shu'aib was in the fourth generation from Abraham, being a great-grandson of Madyan (a son of Abraham), he would be only about a century from the time of Abraham, whereas the Hebrew Bible would give us a period of four to six centuries between Abraham and Moses. The mere fact that Jethro was a Midianite and that another name, Hobab, is mentioned for a father-in-law of Moses in Num. x. 29, is slender ground for identification. As the Midianites were mainly a nomad tribe, we need not be surprised that their destruction in one or two settlements did not affect their life in wandering sections of the tribe in other geographical regions. Shu'aib's mission was apparently in one of the settled towns of the Midianites, which was completely destroyed by an earthquake (vii. 91). If this happened in the century after Abraham, there is no difficulty in supposing that they were again a numerous tribe three or five centuries later, in the time of Moses (see last note). As they were a mixed wandering tribe, both their resilience and their eventual absorption can be easily understood. But the destruction of the settlement or settlements (if the Wood or Aika was a separate settlement, see n. 2000 to xv. 78) to which Shu'aib was sent to preach was complete, and no traces of it now remain.

The name of the highest mountain of Yemen, Nabr Shu'aib (11,000 ft.) has probably no connection with the geographical territory of the nomad Midianites, unless we suppose that their wanderings extended so far south from the territories mentioned in the last note.

Of those who did mischief. ¹⁰⁵⁵

87. "And if there is a party
Among you who believes
In the Message with which
I have been sent, and a party
Which does not believe, ¹⁰⁵⁶
Hold yourselves in patience
Until God doth decide

8 Between us: for He
30 Is the best to decide." ¹⁰⁵⁷

المُفْسِدِينَ ○
هـ وَإِنْ كَانَ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْكُمْ آمَنُوا
بِالَّذِي أُرْسِلَتْ بِهِ
وَطَائِفَةٌ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا
فَأَصْبِرُوا حَتَّى يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَنَا
وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ○

1055. The Midianites were in the path of a commercial highway of Asia, *viz.*, that between two such opulent and highly organised nations as Egypt and the Mesopotamian group comprising Assyria and Babylonia. Their besetting sins are thus characterised here: (1) giving short measure or weight, whereas the strictest commercial probity is necessary for success, (2) a more general form of such fraud, depriving people of rightful dues, (3) producing mischief and disorder, where peace and order had been established (again in a literal as well as a metaphorical sense); (4) not content with upsetting settled life, taking to highway robbery, literally as well as (5) metaphorically, in two ways, *viz.*, cutting off people from access to the worship of God, and abusing religion and piety for crooked purposes, *i. e.*, exploiting religion itself for their crooked ends, as when a man builds houses of prayer out of unlawful gains or ostentatiously gives charity out of money which he has obtained by force or fraud, etc. After setting out this catalogue of besetting sins Shu'aib makes two appeals to the past: (1) You began as an insignificant tribe, and by God's favour you increased and multiplied in numbers and resources; do you not then owe a duty to God to fulfil His Law? (2) What was the result in the case of those who fell into sin? Will you not take warning by their example?

So Shu'aib began his argument with faith in God as the source of all virtue, and ended it with destruction as the result of all sin. In the next verse he pleads with them to end their controversies and come to God.

1056. Madyan is torn by internal conflict. Shu'aib comes as a peace-maker, not in virtue of his own wisdom, but by an appeal to the truth, righteousness and justice of God. As we see later, the real motives of his opponents were selfishness, arrogance, violence, lawlessness, and injustice. But he appeals to their better nature, and is prepared to argue on the basis that the party which wants to suppress those who believe in God's Message and in righteousness, has some sincere mental difficulty in accepting Shu'aib's mission. "If," he says to them, "that is the case, do you think it justifies your intolerance, your violence, or your persecution? On the contrary, events will prove by themselves who is right and who is wrong." To the small band who believe in his mission and follow his teaching, he would preach patience and perseverance. His argument to them would be: "You have faith; surely your faith is strong enough to sustain you in the hope that God's truth will triumph in the end; there is no cause for despair or dejection."

How exactly these past experiences fit the times of our holy guide Muhammad! And it is for that analogy and that lesson that the stories of Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lūṭ, and Shu'aib are related to us,—all different, and yet all pointing to the great lessons in Muhammad's life.

1057. See the argument in the last note. God's decision may come partly in this very life either for the same generation or for succeeding generations, by the logic of external events. But in any case it is bound to come spiritually on a higher plane eventually, when the righteous will be comforted and the sinners will be convinced of sin from their own inner conviction.

88. The leaders, the arrogant Party among his people, said : 1058
 "Oh Shu'aib! we shall
 Certainly drive thee out
 Of our city—(thee) and those
 Who believe with thee;
 Or else ye (thou and they)
 Shall have to return
 To our ways and religion."
 He said: "What! even
 Though we do detest them?"

89. "We should indeed invent 1059
 A lie against God,
 If we returned to your ways
 After God hath rescued
 Us therefrom; nor could we
 By any manner of means
 Return thereto unless it be
 As in the will and plan of God, 1060
 Our Lord. Our Lord
 Can reach out to the utmost
 Recesses of things by His
 knowledge.
 In God is our trust.
 Our Lord! Decide thou 1061
 Between us and our people

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا
 مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكَ
 وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَكَ
 مِنْ قَرْيَتِنَا
 أَوْ لَنَعُودَنَّ فِي دِينِنَا
 قَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا كَارِهِينَ
 قَدْ أَفْرَيْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
 إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ
 بَعْدَ إِذْ بَخَّسَ اللَّهُ مِنْهَا
 وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَعُودَ فِيهَا
 إِلَّا أَنْ يَفْعَلَ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا
 وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا
 عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا
 رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا

1058. The gentle, all-persuasive arguments of Shu'aib fell on hard hearts. Their only reply was: "Turn him out!—him and his people." When courtesy and a plea for toleration are pitted against bigotry, what room is there for logic? But bigotry and unrighteousness have their own crooked ways of pretending to be tolerant. "O yes!" they said, "we are very tolerant and long-suffering! But we are for our country and religion. Come back to the ways of our fathers, and we shall graciously forgive you!" "Ways of their fathers!"—they meant injustice and oppression, high-handedness to the poor and the weak, fraud under cover of religion, and so on! Perhaps the righteous were the poor and the weak. Were they likely to love such ways? Perhaps there was implied a bribe as well as a threat. "If you come back and wink at our iniquities, you shall have scraps of prosperity thrown at you. If not, out you go in disgrace!"

1059. The answer of the righteous is threefold. (1) "Coming back is all very well. But do you mean that we should practise the vices we detest?" (2) "You want us to lie against our conscience and our God, after we have seen the evil of your ways." (3) "Neither bribes nor threats, nor specious appeals to patriotism or ancestral religion can move us; the matter rests with God, Whose will and pleasure we obey, and on Whom alone we rely. His knowledge will search out all your specious pretences."

1060. This, of course, does not mean that any one can ever return to evil ways with God's consent. Shu'aib has already emphatically repudiated the idea of returning "to your ways after God hath rescued us therefrom." But even if their ways had been good, the human will, he goes on to say, has no data to rely upon, and he and his followers would only be guided by God's Will and Plan.

1061. Having answered the insincere quibblers among the godless, the righteous turn to God in earnest prayer. The endless controversies in this world about abstract or speculative things never end even where both sides are sincere in their beliefs. The decision must be taken to God, Who sits on the throne of Truth, and Whose decisions will, therefore, be free from the errors and imperfections of all human judgment. The sincere have nothing to fear in the appeal to Him, as their motives are pure.

In truth, for thou
Art the best to decide."

90. The leaders, the Unbelievers
Among his people, said:
"If ye follow Shu'aib,
Be sure ye are ruined!" 1062

91. But the earthquake took them
Unawares, and they lay
Prostrate in their homes
Before the morning! 1063

92. The men who rejected
Shu'aib became as if
They had never been
In the homes where they
Had flourished: the men
Who rejected Shu'aib—
It was they who were ruined!

93. So Shu'aib left them,
Saying: "Oh my people!
I did indeed convey to you
The Messages for which
I was sent by my Lord:
I gave you good counsel,
But how shall I lament

بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاقِرِينَ ۝

۹۰- وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ
لِإِنِ اتَّبَعْتُمْ شُعَيْبًا إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا الْخُسُوفُونَ ۝

۹۱- فَأَخَذَ نَفْثُهُمُ الرِّجْفَةَ
فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جُثُثِينَ ۝

۹۲- الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا
كَانَ لَمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَا
الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا
كَانُوا هُمُ الْخَاسِرِينَ ۝

۹۳- فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ
وَقَالَ يُقَوْمُوا لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ
رِسَالَتِي رَاقِيًا وَنَصَّيْتُ لَكُمْ
كُلَّيْتِ أَسَى

1062. The answer of the Unbelievers is characteristic. As all their bribes and subtleties have failed, they resort to threats, which are worse than the argument of the stick. "All right," they say, "there is nothing but ruin before you!" That means that the Believers will be persecuted, held up to obloquy, ostracised, and prevented from access to all means of honourable livelihood; their families and dependents will be insulted, reviled, and tortured, if they could but be got into the enemy's power; their homes destroyed, and their names held up to ridicule and contempt even when they are gone. But, as verse 92 says, their wicked designs recoiled on themselves: it was the wicked who were ruined and blotted out.

1063. The fate of the Madyan people is described in the same terms as that of the *Thamūd* in verse 78 above. An earthquake seized them by night, and they were buried in their own homes, no longer to vex God's earth. But a supplementary detail is mentioned in xxvi. 189, "the punishment of a day of overshadowing gloom," which may be understood to mean a shower of ashes and cinders accompanying a volcanic eruption. Thus a day of terror drove them into their homes, and the earthquake finished them. The lament of Shu'aib in verse 93 is almost the same as that of *Salih* in verse 79, with two differences: (1) Shu'aib's messages attacked the many sins of his people (see n. 1055) and are, therefore, expressed in the plural, while *Salih*'s fight was chiefly against selfish arrogance, and his message is expressed in the singular; (2) the *Thamūd* were the more cultured people of the two, and perished in their own pride; as *Salih* said, "ye love not good counsellors"; the Midianites were a rougher people, and their minds were less receptive of argument or faith; as Shu'aib said, they were a people who "refused to believe."

Over a people who refuse
To believe!" 1064.

SECTION 12.

94. Whenever We sent a prophet
To a town, We took up
Its people in suffering
And adversity, in order
That they might learn humility. 1065

95. Then We changed their suffering
Into prosperity, until they grew 1066
And multiplied, and began
To say: "Our fathers (too)
Were touched by suffering
And affluence" ... Behold!
We called them to account
Of a sudden, while they
Realised not (their peril).

96. If the people of the towns
Had but believed and feared
God, We should indeed
Have opened out to them

عَلَى قَوْمٍ كَفَرِينَ ۝

۹۴- وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ
إِلَّا أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَاءِ
وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضُرَّعُونَ ۝

۹۵- ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَا مَكَانَ الشِّتَاءِ الْحَسَنَةَ
حَتَّىٰ عَفَوْا
وَقَالُوا قَدْ مَسَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الضَّرَّاءُ
وَالنَّوَارُ ۚ فَأَخَذْنَا لَهُمْ بَغْتَةً
وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۝

۹۶- وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا
لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّا

1064. Can we get any idea of the chronological place of the destruction of the Midianites? In n. 1053 (vii. 85) we have discussed the geographical aspects. The following considerations will help us in getting some idea of their period. (1) The stories of Noah, Hūd, ʿĀlīh, Lūṭ, and Shuʿaib seem to be in chronological order. Therefore Shuʿaib came after Abraham, whose nephew Lūṭ was. (2) If Shuʿaib was in the fourth generation from Abraham, (see n. 1590 to xi. 89), it would be impossible for him to have been a contemporary of Moses, who came many centuries later. This difficulty is recognised by Ibn Kathīr and other classical commentators. (3) The identification of Shuʿaib with Jethro the father-in-law of Moses is without warrant; see n. 1054 (vii. 85). (4) Shuʿaib must have been before Moses; see vii. 103. (5) The Midianites who were destroyed by Moses and by Gideon after him (n. 1053) were local remnants, as we may speak of the Jews at the present day; but their existence as a nation in their original home-lands seems to have ended before Moses: "they became as if they had never been in the homes where they had flourished" (vii. 92). (6) Josephus, Eusebius, and Ptolemy mention a town of Madyan, but it was not of any importance (n. 1053). (7) After the first centuries of the Christian era Madyan as a town appears as an unimportant place resting on its past.

1065. Man was originally created pure. The need of a prophet arises when there is some corruption and iniquity, which he is sent to combat. His coming means much trial and suffering, especially to those who join him in his protest against wrong. Even so peaceful a prophet as Jesus said: "I came not to send peace but a sword" (Matt. x. 34). But it is all in God's Plan, for we must learn humility if we would be worthy of Him.

1066. God gives enough rope to the sinful. They grow and multiply, and become scornful. Neither suffering nor affluence teaches them the lessons which they are meant to learn, viz., patience and humility, gratitude and kindness to others. They take adversity and prosperity alike as a matter of chance. "Oh yes!" they say, "such things have happened in all ages! Our fathers had such experience before us, and our sons will have them after us. Thus goes on the world for all time!" But does it? What about the Plan of the Architect? They are found napping when Nemesis overtakes them in the midst of their impious tomfoolery!

All kinds of blessings
From heaven and earth ;
But they rejected (the truth),
And We brought them
To book for their misdeeds.

97. Did the people of the towns
Feel secure against the coming ¹⁰⁶⁷
Of Our wrath by night
While they were asleep ?

98. Or else did they feel
Secure against its coming
In broad daylight while they
Played about (care-free) ?

99. Did they then feel secure
Against the Plan of God ?—
But no one can feel
Secure from the Plan
Of God, except those
(Doomed) to ruin! ¹⁰⁶⁸

بَرَكَاتٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَلَكِنْ كَذَّبُوا

تَاخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْكُمْ كَافُلًا يَكْسِبُونَ

۞ أَفَأَمِنْ أَهْلُ الْقُرَى أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ
بِأَسْنَائِبِ بَنَاتٍ لَهُمْ تَرْجُونَ ۝

۞ أَوْ أَجْنَحُ أَهْلُ الْقُرَى أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ
بِأَسْنَائِبِ كُفًى وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ۝

۞ أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ ۝

فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ

إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ۝

C. 86.—While the story of the prophets who preached
(vii. 100-157.) In vain to their people pre-figures

The struggles in the early careers
Of all apostles, the story of Moses,—
His struggles with an alien and arrogant
People, his final deliverance
Of his people from foreign domination,
And his leading them within sight
Of the Promised Land, in spite
Of the forces that resisted,— pre-figures
The early struggles and eventual triumph
Of Muhammad the Holy Apostle of God.

1067. This and the two following verses should be read together. They furnish a commentary on the story of the five prophets that has already been related. God's wrath may come by night or by day, whether people are arrogantly defying God's laws or are sunk in lethargy or vain dreams of unreality. Who can escape God's Plan, and who can feel themselves outside it except those who are seeking their own ruin?

1068. This closes that chapter of the narrative which deals with apostles who were rejected by their own people, but who stood firm on God's message and were able to rescue a remnant who believed. In each case there were special circumstances and special besetting sins which have been explained in the notes. The nations which as a body could not be won over to God's Law perished. So far we have been dealing with the corruptions and iniquities within each nation. In the story of Moses we have first a struggle against the bondage of Egypt, one of the foremost powers then in the world, the rescue of the Israelites and their wanderings, and their proving themselves unworthy and being left to wander in a new sense when they rejected the new Prophet (Muhammad) who came to renew God's Message.

SECTION 13.

100. To those who inherit
The earth in succession
To its (previous) possessors,
Is it not a guiding (lesson)
That, if We so willed,
We could punish them (too)
For their sins, and seal up
Their hearts so that they
Could not hear? ¹⁰⁶⁹

101. Such were the towns
Whose story We (thus)
Relate unto thee:
There came indeed to them
Their apostles with clear (Signs):
But they would not believe
What they had rejected

before. ¹⁰⁷⁰

Thus doth God seal up
The hearts of those
Who reject Faith.

102. Most of them We found not
Men (true) to their covenant:
But most of them We found
Rebellious and disobedient.

103. Then after them We sent
Moses with Our Signs,
To Pharaoh and his chiefs,
But they wrongfully rejected them:
So see what was the end
Of those who made mischief.

۱۰۰- أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْأَرْضَ
مِنْ بَعْدِ أَهْلِهَا
أَنْ لَوْ شَاءَ أَصْبَحْنَا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
وَنُظْمِرَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ
فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ○

۱۰۱- تِلْكَ الْقُرَى
نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِهَا
وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
فَمَا كَانُوا لِلَّذِينَ هُمْ بِمَا كَذَّبُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ
كَذَلِكَ يُظْمِرُ اللَّهُ
عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْكَافِرِينَ ○

۱۰۲- وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لِأَكْثَرِهِمْ مِنْ عَهْدٍ
وَإِنْ وَجَدْنَا أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفَاسِقِينَ ○

۱۰۳- ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا
إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَوَلَّاهُ
فَطَلَمُوا بِهَا
فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ○

¹⁰⁶⁹ The stories which have been related should give a warning to present and future generations which have inherited the land, the power, or the experience of the past. They should know that if they fall into the same sins they will meet with the same fate: when through their contumacy their hearts are hardened, they do not listen to the advice that falls on their ears.

¹⁰⁷⁰ These who have heard the Message and rejected it find it more difficult afterwards to retrace their steps. Evil has blocked the channels of God's grace to them. It begins with their breaking their Covenant with God; with each step afterwards they fall deeper and deeper into the mire.

104. Moses¹⁰⁷¹ said: "Oh
Pharaoh!¹⁰⁷²

I am an apostle from
The Lord of the Worlds,—

١٠٤ وَقَالَ مُوسَى يُقْرِعُونَ
لِي رَسُولٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

105. One for whom it is right
To say nothing but truth
About God. Now have I
Come unto you (people), from¹⁰⁷³
Your Lord, with a clear (Sign):
So let the Children of Israel
Depart along with me."

١٠٥ حَقِيقٌ عَلَى أَنْ لَا أَقُولَ
عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقُّ ۖ
قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
فَأَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ۝
١٠٦ قَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ جَاءْتَ بِآيَةٍ

106. (Pharaoh) said: "If indeed
Thou hast come with a Sign,

1071. The story of Moses is told in many places in the Holy Qurān, with a special lesson in each context. In ii. 49-71, the story is an appeal to the Jews from their own scripture and traditions, to show their true place in the religious history of mankind, and how they forfeited it. Here we have an instructive parallelism in that story to the story of Muḥammad's mission,—how both these men of God had to fight against (1) a foreign foe, arrogant, unjust, faithless, and superstitious, and (2) against the same class of internal foe among their own people. Both of them won through. In the case of Moses, the foreign foe was Pharaoh and his Egyptians, who boasted of their earlier and superior civilisation; in the case of the Prophet Muḥammad the foreign foes were the Jews themselves and the Christians of his day. Moses led his people nearly to the Land of Promise in spite of rebellions among his own people; Muḥammad succeeded completely in overcoming the resistance of his own people by his own virtues and firmness of character, and by the guidance of God. What was a hope when these Meccan verses were revealed became an accomplishment before the end of his life and mission on earth.

1072. "Pharaoh" (Arabic; *Fir'aun*) is a dynastic title, not the name of any particular king in Egypt. It has been traced to the ancient Hieroglyphic words, *Per-aa*, which mean "Great House." The *ma* is an "infirm" letter added in the process of Arabisation. Who was the Pharaoh in the story of Moses? If the Inscriptions had helped us, we could have answered with some confidence, but unfortunately the Inscriptions fail us. It is probable that it was an early Pharaoh of the XVIIIth Dynasty, say Thothmes I, about 1540 B.C. See appendix IV, on Egyptian Chronology and Israel, printed at the end of this *Sara*.

1073. Notice that Moses, in addressing Pharaoh and the Egyptians, claims his mission to be not from *his* God, or *his people's* God but from "*your* Lord," from "the Lord of the Worlds." And his mission is not to *his* people only: "I come unto *you* (Egyptian people) from *your* Lord." The spirit of our version is entirely different from the spirit of the same story as told in the Old Testament (Exod. chapters i. to xv.). In Exod. iii. 18, the mission of Moses is to be expressed as from "the Lord God of the Hebrews."

The essence of the whole Islamic story is this. Joseph's sufferings and good fortune were not merely a story in a romance. Joseph was a prophet; his sufferings and his subsequent rise to power and position in Egypt were to be a lesson (a) to his wicked brothers who sold him into slavery, (b) to his people who were stricken with famine and found a welcome in Egypt, and (c) to the Egyptians, who were arrogant over their high material civilisation, but had yet to be taught the pure faith of Abraham. Israel prospered in Egypt, and stayed there perhaps two to four centuries. (Renan allows only one century.) Times changed, and the racial bigotry of the Egyptians showed its head again, and Israel was oppressed. Moses was raised up with a threefold mission again (a) to learn all the learning of the Egyptians and preach God's Truth to them as one who had been brought up among themselves, (b) to unite and reclaim his own people, and (c) to rescue them and lead them to a new world, which was to open out their spiritual horizon and lead them to the Psalms of David and the glories of Solomon.

Show it forth,—
If thou tellest the truth." 1071

107. Then (Moses) threw his rod,
And behold! it was
A serpent, plain (for all to see)! 1075

108. And he drew out his hand,
And behold! it was white
To all beholders! 1076

SECTION 14.

109. Said the Chiefs of the people
Of Pharaoh: "This is indeed
A sorcerer well-versed.

110. "His plan is to get you out
Of your land: then
What is it ye counsel?" 1077

فَاتَّيَبَهَا إِنَّ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ٥

١٠٤- فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ

فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُبِينٌ ٥

١٠٨- وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ

فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنَّاظِرِينَ ٥

١٠٩- قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ

إِنَّ هَذَا سَاحِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ٥

١١٠- يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ

فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ ٥

1074. The ensuing dialogue shows the psychology on the two sides. Pharaoh is sitting in his Darbar, with his ministers and chiefs around him. In their arrogance they are only amused at the effrontery and apparent revolt of the Israelite leaders, and they rely upon their own superior worldly power, aided by the-magic which was a part of the Egyptian religion. Confronting them stand two men, Moses with his mission from God, and his brother Aaron who was his lieutenant. They are confident, not in their own powers but in the mission they had received. The first thing they have to do is to act on the subjective mind of the Egyptians, and by methods which by God's miracle show that Egyptian magic was nothing before the true power of God.

1075. The serpent played a large part in Egyptian mythology. The great sun-god Ra won a great victory over the serpent Apophis, typifying the victory of light over darkness. Many of their gods and goddesses took the forms of snakes to impress their foes with terror. Moses's rod as a type of a serpent at once appealed to the Egyptian mentality. The contempt which the Egyptians had entertained in their minds before was converted into terror. Here was some one who could control the reptile which their great god Ra himself had such difficulty in overcoming!

1076. But the second Sign displayed by Moses was even more puzzling to the Egyptians. Moses drew out his hand from the folds of the garments on his breast, and it was white and shining as with divine light! This was to counter any suggestions of evil, which the serpent might have created. This was no work of evil,—of black magic, or a trick or illusion. His hand was transfigured—with a light which no Egyptian sorcerers could produce. In Islam the "white hand" of Moses has passed into a proverb, for a symbol of divine glory dazzling to the beholders.

1077. The two Signs had the desired effect on the Egyptians. They were impressed, but they judged them by their own standards. They thought to themselves, "These are ordinary sorcerers: let us search out our best sorcerers and show them that they have superior power." But like all worldly people, they began to fear for their own power and possessions. It was far from Moses's intention to drive out the Egyptians from their own land. He merely wanted to end the Egyptian oppression. But the Egyptians had a guilty conscience, and they judged other people's motives by their own. They discussed the matter in Council on quite wrong premises.

111. They said : " Keep him
And his brother in suspense
(For a while) ; and send
To the cities men to collect—
112. And bring up to thee
All (our) sorcerers well-versed." 1078
113. So there came
The sorcerers to Pharaoh ;
They said, " Of course
We shall have a (suitable)
Reward if we win ! " 1079
114. He said : " Yea, (and more),—
For ye shall in that case
Be (raised to posts)
Nearest (to my person). "
115. They said : " Oh Moses !
Wilt thou throw (first),
Or shall we have
The (first) throw ? "
116. Said Moses : " Throw ye (first). "
So when they threw,
They bewitched the eyes
Of the people, and struck
Terror into them : for they
Showed a great (feat of) magic. 1080

١١١- قَالُوا أَتُحَدِّثُ أَخَاكَ
وَأَنْزِلُ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ

١١٢- يَأْتِيَنَّكَ بِكُلِّ سِحْرٍ عَلِيمٍ

١١٣- وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَاءُ فَرَعَوْنَ
قَالُوا إِنْ لَنَا أَجْرٌ
إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ

١١٤- قَالَ نَعَمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ

١١٥- قَالُوا لِمُوسَى إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقِيَ
وَأِمَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ

١١٦- قَالَ الْقَوَا
فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ
وَأَسْرَفُوهُمْ وَجَاءَ زبَانُهُمْ عَظِيمٌ

1078. The advice of the Council to Pharaoh shows a misreading of the situation. They were in a panic about what the magic of this evidently powerful sorcerer could do against them. So they advised the Pharaoh to summon their most powerful sorcerers from all over the country, and in the meantime to hold Moses and Aaron in suspense,— neither to yield to them nor definitely to oppose them. The men of God could well afford to wait. Time is always in favour of Truth.

1079. The most noted sorcerers of Pharaoh came. Their art was built up on trickery and imposture, and the first thing they could think of was to make a selfish bargain for themselves. The Pharaoh and his Council would in their present state of panic agree to anything. And so they did. Pharaoh not only promised them any rewards they desired if they foiled the strange power of these men, but he also promised them the highest dignities round his own person. And so the contest begins, with due observance of the amenities observed by combatants before they come to close grips.

1080. Moses and his brother Aaron were pitted against the most skilful magic-men of Egypt, but they were calm and confident and let the magic-men have their innings first. As is usual in this world, the magicians' trickery made a great impression on the people, but when Moses threw his rod, the illusion was broken, and the falsehood was all shown up. In the Old Testament story (Exod. vii. 10-12) it was Aaron that threw the rod, and he threw it before the magicians. Aaron's rod became a serpent. Then the magicians threw their rods, and they became serpents, but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. The story given to us is more dramatic and less literal. We are told in general terms that Moses first allowed the magic-men to play their tricks. The rod of Moses was the symbol of his authority. It must have been a simple shepherd's crook with which he used to feed his flocks. With God's grace behind him, he was able to expose all false trickery and establish the Truth.

117. We put it into Moses's mind
By inspiration: " Throw (now)
Thy rod " : and behold !
It swallows up straightway
All the falsehoods
Which they fake !

١١٧- وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ
أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ
فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ۝

118. Thus truth was confirmed,
And all that they did
Was made of no effect.

١١٨- فَوَقَّعَ الْحَقُّ
وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝

119. So the (great ones) were vanquished
There and then, and were
Made to look small.¹⁰⁸¹

١١٩- فَغُلِبُوا هُنَاكَ
وَالْقُلُوبُ صَغِيرِينَ ۝

120. But the sorcerers fell down
Prostrate in adoration,

١٢٠- وَالْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سَاجِدِينَ ۝

121. Saying: " We believe
In the Lord of the Worlds,—

١٢١- قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

122. " The Lord of Moses and Aaron."

١٢٢- رَبِّ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ۝

123. Said Pharaoh: " Believe ye
In Him before I give
You permission? Surely
This is a trick which ye
Have planned in the City
To drive out its people:
But soon shall ye know
(The consequences).¹⁰⁸²

١٢٣- قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ اامْنُتُمْ بِهِ
قَبْلَ أَنْ اأْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَمَكْرٌ
مِّمَّكَرُكُمُوهُ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ
لِيُخْرِجُوا مِنْهَا أَهْلَهَا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

1081. The proud ones of the Court—Pharaoh and his chiefs—were hard-hearted, and the exposure of the imposture only made them wreak their rage on those whom they could reach. On the other hand the effect on the humbler ones—those who had been made the dupes and instruments of the imposture—was quite different. Their conscience was awakened. They fell down to the ground in adoration of the Lord of the Worlds, and confessed their faith.

1082. Pharaoh and his Court were doubly angry: first because they were made to look small when confronted by the power of God, and secondly, because their dupes and instruments were snatched away from them. These men, the sorcerers, at once recognised the Signs of God, and in their case the mission of Moses and Aaron was fulfilled. They turned back on their past life of imposture, make-believe, false worship, and oppression of the weak, and confessed the One true God. As usually happens, hardened sinners resent all the more the saving of any of their companions from sin and error. Judging other people's motives by their own, they accuse them of duplicity, and if they have the power, they take cruel revenge. Here the Pharaoh threatens the repentant sinners with the extreme punishment for treason and apostasy (cutting off of hands and feet, combined with an ignominious death on the cross, as in the case of the worst malefactors). But they remained firm, and prayed to God for patience and constancy. Probably their influence spread quietly in the commonalty. Ultimately it appeared on the Throne itself, in the person of Amenophis IV about five or six generations afterwards. See Appendix V, on Egyptian Religion, printed at the end of this Sara.

124. "Be sure I will cut off
Your hands and your feet
On opposite sides, and I
Will cause you all
To die on the cross."
125. They said: "For us,
We are but sent back
Unto our Lord:
126. "But thou dost wreak
Thy vengeance on us
Simply because we believed
In the Signs of our Lord
When they reached us!
Our Lord! pour out on us
Patience and constancy, and take
Our souls unto Thee
As Muslims who bow
To Thy Will!" 1083

SECTION 15.

127. Said the chiefs of Pharaoh's
People: "Wilt thou leave
Moses and his people,
To spread mischief in the land,
And to abandon thee
And thy gods?" He said:
"Their male children will we
Slay; (only) their females
Will we save alive;
And we have over them

١٢٣- لَا قُطِعَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأُفْعِلْكُمْ

مِنْ خِلَافٍ

ثُمَّ لَا صَلَافَ لَكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ○

١٢٥- قَالُوا

إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ ○

١٢٦- وَمَا تَنْقِمُ مِنَّا

إِلَّا أَنْ آمَنَّا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا

لَمَّا جَاءَنَا

رَبُّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا

وَتَوَفَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ ○

٤

١٢٤- وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنَ قُوْرِ فِرْعَوْنَ
اتَّكِرُ مَوْسَىٰ وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَيَذَرُكَ وَالرَّهْتَكَ
قَالَ سَتَقْتُلُنَّ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ
وَكُنتُمْ عَلَىٰ نِسَاءِهِمْ وَإِنَّا لَفَوْقَهُمْ

1083. These Egyptians, by their patience and constancy, show that their repentance was true. Thus in their case the mission of Moses was fulfilled directly, and their number must have amounted to a considerable figure. They were martyrs to their faith, and their martyrdom affected their nation in two ways. In the first place, as they were the pick of those who practised the false superstition in Egypt, their conversion and disappearance dealt a staggering blow to the whole system. Secondly, the indirect effect of their martyrdom on the commonalty of Egypt must have been far greater than can be measured by numbers. The banner of God was planted, and the silent spiritual fight must have gone on ever since, though history, in recording outward events, is silent on the slow and gradual processes of transformation undergone by Egyptian religion. From a chaotic pantheon of animals and animal gods, the worship of the sun and the heavenly bodies, and the worship of the Pharaoh as the embodiment of power, they gradually came to realise the oneness and mercy of the true God. After many glimpses of Monotheism on Egyptian soil itself, the Gospel of Jesus reached them, and eventually Islam.

(Power) irresistible." ¹⁰⁸⁴

128. Said Moses to his people :
" Pray for help from God,
And (wait) in patience and
constancy :

For the earth is God's,
To give as a heritage
To such of his servants
As He pleaseth ; and the end
Is (best) for the righteous. ¹⁰⁸⁶

129. They said : " We have had
(Nothing but) trouble, both before
And after thou camest ¹⁰⁸⁶
To us." He said :
" It may be that your Lord
Will destroy your enemy
And make you inheritors ¹⁰⁸⁷
In the earth ; that so
He may try you
By your deeds."

SECTION 16.

130. ~~W~~c punished the people
Of Pharaoh with years

قَاهِرُونَ ○

١٢٨- قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ

اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللّٰهِ

وَاصْبِرُوا اِنَّ الْاَرْضَ لِلّٰهِ

يُوْرِثُهَا مَنْ يَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ○

١٢٩- قَالُوا اَوُؤْتِنَا مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ كُنَّا بَنِي

وَمِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جِئْتَنَا

قَالَ عَلٰى رَبِّكُمْ اَنْ يُهْلِكَ عَدُوْكُمْ

وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ

فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ○

١٣٠- وَلَقَدْ اخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالضَّلٰتِ

1084. Pharaoh's order against the sorcerers was drastic enough. But his Council is not satisfied. What about Moses and the Israelites? They had a seeming victory, and will now be more mischievous than ever. They appeal to Pharaoh's vanity and his superstition and sense of power. "If you leave them alone," they say, "where will be your authority? You and your gods will be defied!" Pharaoh has a ready answer. He was really inwardly cowed by the apparent power of Moses. He dared not openly act against him. But he had already, before the birth of Moses, passed a cunning order to destroy the whole people of Israel. Through the instrumentality of midwives (Exod. i. 15) all the male children were to be destroyed, and the females would then be for the Egyptians: the race of Israel would thus be at an end. This order was still in force, and would remain in force until the despised race was absorbed. But Egyptian cunning and wickedness had no power against God's Plan for those who had faith. See verse 129 below.

1085. Notice the contrast between the arrogant tone of Pharaoh and the humility and faith taught by Moses. In the end the arrogance was humbled, and humility and faith were protected and advanced.

1086. There is a slight note of querulousness in the people's answer. But Moses allays it by his own example and courage, and his vision of the future: which was amply fulfilled in time. See verse 137 below.

1087. The Israelites, despised and enslaved, were to be rescued and made rulers in Palestine. David and Solomon were great kings and played a notable part in history. But the greatness of Israel was conditional; they were to be judged by their deeds. When they fell from grace, other people were given honour and power. And so it came to be the turn of the Arab race, and so on, God gives His gifts to those who are righteous and obey His Law.

(Of drought) and shortness
Of crops; that they might
Call God to remembrance.

131. But when good (times) came,
They said, "This is due
To us;" when gripped
By calamity, they ascribed it
To evil omens connected
With Moses and those with him!
Behold! in truth the omens
Of evil are theirs.¹⁰⁸⁸
In God's sight, but most
Of them do not understand!

132. They said (to Moses):
"Whatever be the Signs
Thou bringest, to work
Therewith thy sorcery on us,¹⁰⁸⁹
We shall never believe
In thee."

133. So We sent (plagues) on them:
Wholesale Death,¹⁰⁹⁰
Locusts, Lice, Frogs,
And Blood: Signs openly.¹⁰⁹¹
Self-explained: but they
Were steeped in arrogance,—
A people given to sin.

134. Every time the Penalty
Fell on them, they said:

وَنَقِصَ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذْكُرُونَ ○

١٣١-وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْحَسَنَةُ
قَالُوا الْكَافَّةُ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ
يَتَكَبَّرُوا لِيُؤْخَذَ مِنْهُمْ
أَلَا إِنَّمَا ظَنَرُوهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ○

١٣٢-وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا آيَاتُنَا مِنْ رَبِّنَا
لَنَنْسَحَرَنَ بِهَا
فَمَا تَنْفَعُكَ بِؤْسُ مُنِينٍ ○

١٣٣-فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ
وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقَتَلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ
وَالذَّلَٰلَةَ مُفَصَّلَاتٍ
فَأَسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ○

١٣٤-وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحُ قَالُوا

1088. Their superstition ascribed the punishment of their own wickedness to some evil omen. They thought Moses and his people brought them ill-luck. They did not look within themselves to see the root of evil, and the cause of their punishment! So it happens in all ages. People blame the righteous for something which they do, different from other men, instead of searching out their own lapses from rectitude, which are punished by God.

1089. A type of obstinacy and resistance to God's message. As they believed in sorcery and magic, they thought anything unusual was but sorcery and magic and hardened their hearts against Truth.

1090. *Tafas* = a widespread calamity, causing wholesale death and destruction. It may be a flood, or a typhoon, or an epidemic, among men or cattle. Perhaps the last is meant, if we may interpret by the Old Testament story (Exod. ix. 3, 9, 15; xii. 29).

1091. In xvii. 101, the reference is to nine Clear Signs. These are: (1) the Rod (vii. 107), (2) the Radiant Hand (vii. 108), (3) the years of drought or shortage of water (vii. 130), (4) short crops (vii. 130), and the five mentioned in this verse, viz., (5) epidemics among men and beasts, (6) locusts, (7) lice, (8) frogs, and (9) the water turning to blood.

"Oh Moses! on our behalf
Call on thy Lord in virtue
Of His promise to thee:
If thou wilt remove
The Penalty from us,
We shall truly believe in thee,
And we shall send away
The Children of Israel
With thee."¹⁰⁹²

135. But every time We removed
The Penalty from them
According to a fixed term
Which they had to fulfil,—¹⁰⁹³
Behold! they broke their word!

136. So We exacted retribution
From them: We drowned
them ¹⁰⁹⁴
In the sea, because they
Rejected Our Signs, and failed
To take warning from them.¹⁰⁹⁵

137. And We made a people,
Considered weak (and of no
account),
Inheritors of lands
In both East and West,—

يُمُوسَى اِدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ
بِمَا عٰهَدَ عِنْدَكَ
لَئِنْ كَشَفْتَ عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ
لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ
وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ ۝

١٣٥- فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الرِّجْزَ
إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
هُم بِالْعَهْدِ إِذًا هُمْ يَنْكُثُونَ ۝

١٣٦- فَآتَيْنَاهُمُ مِنْهُمْ فَاغْرَقْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ
بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ۝

١٣٧- وَآزَلْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا
يَسْتَضَعُّونَ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ

1092. The demand of Moses was two-fold: (1) come to God and cease from oppression, and (2) let me take Israel out of Egypt. At first it was laughed at and rejected with scorn. When the Plagues came for punishment, each time the Egyptians suffered, they promised amendment and begged Moses to intercede and cause the plague to cease. But every time it ceased, they went back to their evil attitude, until the final retribution came. This is a type of the sinner's attitude for all times.

1093. The intercession of Moses was limited to prayer. Each plague or penalty had its appointed term in God's decree. That term was duly fulfilled before the plague ceased. God's law is firm: it does not vacillate like the human will. The intercession only meant two things: (1) that God's name was invoked and His presence duly brought home to the mind and heart of the sinner who promised repentance, and (2) that the sinner was given a further chance if the prayer was accepted. This again is a universal truth.

1094. When at last Pharaoh let Israel go, they selected, not the highway to Canaan, along the Mediterranean and by Gaza, because they were unarmed and would have encountered immediate opposition there, but by way of the wilderness of Sinai. They had to cross the marshy end of the Red Sea, which they did, while Pharaoh's host which came in pursuit was drowned. Cf. ii. 50.

1095. Where was the Council of Pharaoh held in which Moses addressed Pharaoh? Egypt's primary capital in the XVIIIth Dynasty was Thebes (=No-Ammon), but that was more than 400 miles to the south of the Delta, in whose corner Israel dwelt. Memphis, on the apex of the Delta, a little south of where Cairo is now, was also over 100 miles from Israel's habitations. The interview must have been either in a Palace near Goshen, where the Israelites dwelt, or in Zoan (=Tanis), the Deltaic capital built by a former dynasty, which was of course still available for the reigning dynasty, and which was not far from the Jewish settlement.

Lands whereon We sent
Down Our blessings.
The fair promise of thy Lord
Was fulfilled for the Children
Of Israel, because they had
Patience and constancy,
And We levelled to the ground
The great Works and fine

Buildings
Which Pharaoh and his people
Erected (with such pride).¹⁰⁹⁶

138. ~~We~~ We took the Children of
Israel

(With safety) across the sea.
They came upon a people
Devoted entirely to some idols¹⁰⁹⁷
They had. They said:
"Oh Moses! fashion for us
A god like unto the gods
They have." He said:

وَمَعَارِدَهَا النَّارَ بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا
وَكُنْتُ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَى
عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ
بِمَا صَبَرُوا
وَدُمَرْنَا مَا كَانَ يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ
وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ

٣٨- وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ الْبَحْرَ
فَكَانُوا عَلَى قُومٍ يَعْبُدُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَانِهِمْ
لَهُمْ قَالُوا يَنْبَغِي لَنَا
إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمُ إِلَهَةٌ قَالَ

1096, Israel, which was despised, became a great and glorious nation under Solomon. He had goodly territory, and was doubly blest. His land and people were prosperous, and he was blessed with wisdom from God. His sway and his fame spread east and west. And thus God's promise to Israel was fulfilled. Note that Syria and Palestine had once been under the sway of Egypt. At the same time the proud and rebellious Pharaoh and his people were brought low. The splendid monuments which they had erected with so much skill and pride were mingled with the dust. Their great cities—Thebes (or No-Ammon), Memphis (or Noph, sacred to the Bull of Osiris), and the other splendid cities, became as if they had not existed, and archaeologists have had to dig up their ruins from the sands. The splendid monuments—temples, palaces, tombs, statues, columns, and stately structures of all kinds—were buried in the sands. Even monuments like the Great Sphinx, which seem to defy the ages, were partly buried in the sands, and owe their rescue to the comparatively recent researches of archaeologists. As late as 1743 Richard Pococke in his *Travels in Egypt* (p. 41), remarked: "Most of those pyramids are very much ruined."

The contrast between Egypt and Israel is one part of the story in the march of time. Israel also was found unworthy, and in course of time the Arabs, whom they despised as Ishmaelites, became their masters. The Jews in their Ghettos in Europe suffered much persecution. Nor are they out of the wood yet. If the Pogroms of the Slavs against them have ceased, their fate in Nazi Germany is the talk of the world. Nor had the Arabs or Turks or any nation a perpetual lease of power from God. The test is righteousness and the Muslim virtues taught in the Universal Religion of faith and right conduct.

1097. Who were these people? We are now in the Sinai Peninsula. Two conjectures are possible. (1) The Amalekites of the Sinai Peninsula were at perpetual war with the Israelites. They were probably an idolatrous nation, but we have very little knowledge of their cult. (2) From Egyptian history we know that Egypt had worked from very ancient times some copper mines in Sinai. An Egyptian settlement may have been here. Like all mining camps it contained from the beginning the dregs of the population. When the mines ceased to be worked, the settlement, or what remained of it, must have degenerated further. Cut off from civilisation, its cult must have become still narrower, without the refining influences which a progressive nation applies even to its idolatry. Perhaps Apis, the sacred bull of Memphis, lost all its allegorical meaning for them, and only gross and superstitious rites remained among them. The text speaks of "some idols they had," implying that they had merely a detached fragment of a completer religion. This was a snare in the path of the Israelites, whom many generations of slavery in Egypt had debased into ignorance and superstition.

"Surely ye are a people
Without knowledge.

139. "As to these folk,—
The cult they are in
Is (but) a fragment of a ruin,¹⁰⁹⁸
And vain is the (worship)
Which they practise."

140. He said: "Shall I seek for you
A god other than the (true)
God, when it is God
Who hath endowed you
With gifts above the nations?"

141. And remember We rescued you
From Pharaoh's people,
Who afflicted you with
The worst of penalties,
Who slew your male children
And saved alive your females:
In that was a momentous
Trial from your Lord.¹⁰⁹⁹

SECTION 17.

142. ~~We~~ We appointed for Moses
Thirty nights, and completed
(The period) with ten (more):
Thus was completed the term
(Of communion) with his Lord,¹¹⁰⁰
Forty nights. And Moses
Had charged his brother Aaron
(Before he went up):

إِنكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ○

١٣٩-إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ مُتَّبِعُونَ

مَا هُمْ فِيهِ

وَبُطُلٌ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ○

١٤٠-قَالَ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ

أَبْغَيْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ

وَهُوَ فَضْلُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ○

١٤١-وَأَذِّنْ فِيكُمْ يَوْمَ الْفِرْعَوْنَ

يَسْأَلُونَكُمْ سَوْءَ الْعَذَابِ

يَقْتُلُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ

وَفِي ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ لِّكُم مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ

١٤٢-وَوَعَدْنَا مُوسَى ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً

وَأَتَمَمْنَاهَا بِعَشْرِ

فَكَتَمْنَاهُ مِنَّا رَبِّهِ أَزْوَاجِينَ لَيْلَةً

وَقَالَ مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ

1098. If conjecture 2 in the last note is correct, this idolatrous worship was but the fragment of a ruin from Egypt, and Moses's reproach is biting: "You, who have been rescued from the bondage of living Egypt,—do you hanker after the bondage of a dead cult debased even from that from which you have been rescued?"

Mutabbar—broken in pieces, smashed into fragments, destroyed.

1099. This is God's reminder to Israel through the mouth of Moses. There was a double trial: (1) while the bondage lasted, the people were to learn patience and constancy in the midst of affliction; (2) when they were rescued, they were to learn humility, justice, and righteous deeds of prosperity.

1100. There is much mystic doctrine in this section, and the parallel between Israel and Islam continues throughout. The forty nights' communion of Moses with God on the Mount may be compared with the forty days' fast of Jesus in the wilderness before he took up his ministry (Matt. iv. 2), and with the forty years of Mustafa's preparation in life before he took up his Ministry. In each case the Apostles lived alone from their people, before they came into the full blaze of the events of their Ministry. The forty is divided into thirty and ten, pre-figuring the thirty days of the Ramadan fast, and the ten days of the Zul-Hajj pilgrimage in Islam.

"Act for me amongst my people:
Do right, and follow not
The way of those
Who do mischief." 1101

143. When Moses came
To the place appointed by Us,
And his Lord addressed him,
He said: "Oh my Lord!
Show (Thyself) to me,
That I may look upon Thee." 1102
God said: "By no means
Canst thou see Me (direct);
But look upon the Mount;
If it abide
In its place, then
Shalt thou see Me." 1103
When his Lord manifested
His glory on the Mount,
He made it as dust,
And Moses fell down
In a swoon. When he
Recovered his senses he said:
"Praise be to Thee! To Thee
I turn in repentance, and I
Am the first to believe." 1104

اِخْلُقْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَاصْلِحْ
وَلَا تَجْعَلْ لِي سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ○

١٤٣- وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا
وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ
ارِنِّي أَنْظُرَ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ نَرِيكَ
وَلَكِنْ انْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ
فَإِنْ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ نَرِيكَ
فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ
جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا
وَوَحَّى مُوسَى صَوْعًا
فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا
قَالَ سُبْحَنَكَ ثُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ
وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ○

1101. When for any reason the man of God is absent from his people, his duty of leadership (*khilāfat*) should be taken up by his brother,—not necessarily a blood brother, but one of his society or brotherhood. The deputy should discharge it in all humility, remembering three things: (1) that he is only a deputy, and bound to follow the directions of his Principal, (2) that right and justice are of the essence of power, and (3) that mischief gets its best chance to raise its head in the absence of the Principal, and that the deputy should always guard against the traps laid for him in the Principal's absence.

1102. Even the best of us may be betrayed into overweening confidence or spiritual ambition not yet justified by the stage we have reached. Moses had already seen part of the glory of God in his Radiant White Hand, that shone with the glory of Divine light (vii. 108, n. 1076). But he was still in the flesh, and the mission to his people was to begin after the Covenant of Sinai. It was premature of him to ask to see God.

1103. But God—the Cherisher of all His creatures—treats even our foolish requests with mercy, compassion, and understanding. Even the reflected glory of God is too great for the grosser substance of matter. The peak on which it shone became as powder before the ineffable glory, and Moses could only live by being taken out of his bodily senses. When he recovered from his swoon, he saw the true position, and the distance between our grosser bodily senses and the true splendour of God's glory. He at once turned in penitence to God, and confessed his faith. Having been blinded by the excessive Glory, he could not see with the physical eye. But he could get a glimpse of the reality through faith, and he hastened to proclaim his faith.

1104. "First to believe." Cf. the expression "first of those who bow to God in Islam" in vi. 163 and vi. 163. "First" means here not the first in time, but most zealous in faith. It has the intensive and not the comparative meaning.

144. God said: "Oh Moses!
I have chosen thee
Above (other) men,¹¹⁰⁵
By the mission I (have
Given thee) and the words
I (have spoken to thee):
Take then the (revelation)
Which I give thee,
And be of those
Who give thanks."¹¹⁰⁶

١٤٤- قَالَ يَمُوسَى
إِنِّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ
بِرِسَالَتِي وَبِكَلَامِي
خُذْ مَا أَنَاثَيْتُكَ
وَكنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ○

145. And We ordained laws
For him in the Tablets
In all matters, both
Commanding and explaining
All things, (and said):
"Take and hold these
With firmness, and enjoin
Thy people to hold fast
By the best in the precepts:¹¹⁰⁷
Soon shall I show you¹¹⁰⁸
The homes of the wicked,—¹¹⁰⁹
(How they lie desolate)."

١٤٥- وَكُتِبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَوْحَاءِ
مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَنُوحِطُهُ
وَتَفْصِيلُهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
فُتِحَ مَا بَقِيَ
وَأَمْرُ قَوْمِكَ يَا خُلْدًا بِأَحْسَنِهَا
سَاءَ دَرَجَتُهُمُ دَارَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ○

146. Those who behave arrogantly
On the earth in defiance

١٤٦- سَاحِرُونَ عَنِ الْإِلَهِ الَّذِينَ يَكْبُرُونَ

1105. "Above (other) men": i.e., among his contemporaries. He had a high mission, and he had the honour of speaking to God.

1106. God's revelation is for the benefit of His creatures, who should receive it with reverence and gratitude. While Moses was having these great spiritual experiences on the Mount, his people below were ungrateful enough to forget God and make a golden calf for worship (vii. 147).

1107. The Tablets of the Law contained the essential spiritual Truth, from which were derived the positive injunctions and prohibitions, explanations and interpretations, which it was the function of the prophetic office to hold up for the people to follow. The precepts would contain, as the Shari'at does, matters absolutely prohibited, matters not prohibited but disapproved, matters about which there was no prohibition or injunction, but in which conduct was to be regulated by circumstances; matters of positive and universal duty, matters recommended for those whose zeal was sufficient to enable them to work on higher than minimum standards, and matters which were sought by persons of the highest spiritual eminence. No soul is burdened beyond its capacity; but we are asked to seek the best and highest possible for us in conduct.

1108. Notice the transition from the "We" of authority and honour and impersonal dignity, to the "I" of personal concern in specially guiding the righteous.

1109. There are two meanings, one literal and the other figurative. Literally, the homes of the wicked, both individuals and nations, lie desolate, as in the case of the ancient Egyptians, the 'Ad, and the Thamud. Figuratively, the "home" shows the inner and more intimate condition of people. If you are dazzled by the outward prosperity of the ungodly, examine their inner anguish and fear and insecurity, and you will thank God for His gracious guidance.

Of right—they will I
Turn away from My Signs: ¹¹¹⁰
Even if they see all the Signs,
They will not believe in them;
And if they see the way
Of right conduct, they will
Not adopt it as the Way;
But if they see the way
Of error, that is
The Way they will adopt.
For they have rejected ¹¹¹¹
Our Signs, and failed
To take warning from them.

147. Those who reject Our Signs
And the Meeting in the Hereafter,—
Vain are their deeds:
Can they expect to be rewarded
Except as they have wrought?

SECTION 18.

148. ~~The~~ The people of Moses made,
In his absence, out of their
ornaments, ¹¹¹²

فِي الْأَرْضِ يُعَذِّبُ الْحَقِّ
وَأَن يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا
وَأَن يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ
لَا يَتَّخِذُوا سَبِيلًا
وَأَن يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوا سَبِيلًا
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ٥

۱۴۷- وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ
حُوطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ
إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ٥

۱۴۸- وَالتَّائِخْنَ قَوْمُ مُوسَى
مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ خُلُوفِهِمْ

1110. The argument may be simplified thus in paraphrase. The right is established on the earth as God created it: Nature recognises and obeys God's law as fixed for each portion of Creation. But man, because of the gift of Will, sometimes upsets this balance. The root-cause is his arrogance, as it was in the case of Iblis. God's Signs are everywhere, but if they are rejected with scorn and blasphemy, God will withdraw His grace, for sin hardens the heart and makes it impervious to the truth. Want of faith produces a kind of blindness to spiritual facts, a kind of deafness to the warnings of a Day of Account, when the best of us will need His Mercy for our Salvation, which may be described spiritually as our "Seeing God." If we had contemptuously rejected faith, can we hope for anything but justice,—the just punishment of our sins?

1111. *Rejected Our Signs*: again a return to the Plural of impersonal Dignity and Authority, from the singular of personal concern in granting grace and guidance to the righteous.

1112. The making of the golden calf and its worship by the Israelites during the absence of Moses on the Mount were referred to in ii. 51 and some further details are given in xx. 85-97. Notice how in each case only those points are referred to which are necessary to the argument in hand. A narrator, whose object is mere narration, tells the story in all its details, and is done with it. A consummate artist, whose object is to enforce lessons, brings out each point in its proper place. Master of all details, he does not ramble, but with supreme literary skill, just adds the touch that is necessary in each place to complete the spiritual picture. His object is not a story but a lesson. Here notice the contrast between the intense spiritual communion of Moses on the Mount and the simultaneous corruption of his people in his absence. We can understand his righteous indignation and bitter grief (vii. 150). The people had melted all their gold ornaments, and made the image of a calf like the bull of Osiris in the city of Memphis in the wicked Egypt that they had turned their backs upon.

The image of a calf,
(for worship): ¹¹¹³
It seemed to low: did they ¹¹¹⁴
Not see that it could
Neither speak to them, nor
Show them the Way?
They took it for worship
And they did wrong.

عَجَلًا جَسَدًا إِلَهَ خَوَافًا
الْمُ يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمْ
وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا
اتَّخَذُوهُ وَكَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ ○

قَالَ

149. When they repented, and saw
That they had erred,
They said: "If our Lord
Have not mercy upon us
And forgive us, we shall
Indeed be of those who perish."

١٤٩- وَلَمَّا اسْقَطْنَا فِي آيَاتِنَا مِنْهُمُ
قَدْ ضَلُّوا قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا
وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَكُنَّا مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ○

150. When Moses came back
To his people, angry and grieved,
He said: "Evil it is that ye
Have done in my place
In my absence: did ye ¹¹¹⁵
Make haste to bring on
The judgment of your Lord? "
He put down the Tablets, ¹¹¹⁶

١٥٠- وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَى إِلَى قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ
أَسِفًا قَالَ بُعِثْتُ مَخْلُفًا مُؤْتًى مِنْ بَعْضَى
أَعْمَلْتُمْ أَمْرًا سَرَّ بَكُمْ
وَأَلْقَى الْأَوْثَانَ

1113. *Image of a Calf*: *Jasad* is literally a body, especially the body of a man according to *Khalil* quoted by *Raghib*. In xxi. 8 it is used obviously for the human body, as also in xxxviii. 34; but in the latter case, the idea of an image, without any real life or soul, is also suggested. In the present passage I understand many suggestions: (1) that it was a mere image, without life; (2) as such, it could not low; therefore the appearance of lowing, mentioned immediately afterwards, was a fraud; (3) unlike its prototype, the bull of Osiris, it had not even the symbolism of Osiris behind it; the Osiris myth, in the living religion of Egypt, had at least some ethical principles behind it.

1114. The lowing of the golden calf was obviously a deception practised by the Egyptian promoters of the cult. Lytton in his "Last Days of Pompeii" exposes the deception practised by the priests of Isis. Men hidden behind images imposed on the credulity of the commonalty.

1115. *Did ye make haste...*? 'In your impatience, could you not wait for me? Your lapse into idolatry has only hastened God's wrath. If you had only waited, I was bringing to you in the Tablets the most excellent teaching in the commands of God.' There is subtle irony in the speech of Moses. There is also a play upon words: *'ajl*=calf; and *'ajila*=to make haste: no translation can bring out these niceties.

1116. *Put down the Tablets*: we are not told that the Tablets were broken; in fact vii. 154 (below) shows that they were whole. They contained God's Message. There is a touch of disrespect (if not blasphemy) in supposing that God's Messenger broke the Tablets in his incontinent rage, as is stated in the Old Testament: "Moses's anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands, and brake them beneath the Mount." (Exod. xxxii. 19.) On this point and also on the point that Aaron (in the Old Testament story) ordered the gold to be brought, made a molten calf, fashioned it with a graving tool, and built an altar before the calf (Exod. xxxii. 2-5), our version differs from that of the Old Testament. We cannot believe that Aaron, who was appointed by God to assist Moses as God's Messenger, could descend so low as to seduce the people into idolatry, whatever his human weaknesses might be.

Seized his brother by (the hair
Of) his head, and dragged him ¹¹¹⁷
To him. Aaron said :
"Son of my mother ! The people
Did indeed reckon me
As naught, and went near
To slaying me ! Make not
The enemies rejoice over
My misfortune, nor count thou
Me amongst the people
Of sin." ¹¹¹⁸

151. Moses prayed : "Oh my Lord !
Forgive me and my brother ! ¹¹¹⁹
Admit us to Thy mercy !
For Thou art the Most Merciful
Of those who show mercy !"

SECTION 19.

152. ~~Those~~ Those who took the calf
For worship will indeed
Be overwhelmed with wrath
From their Lord, and with
Shame in this life : ¹¹²⁰
Thus do We recompense
Those who invent (falsehoods).

153. But those who do wrong
But repent thereafter and
(Truly) believe,—verily
Thy Lord is thereafter
Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَأَخَذَ بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ يَجْحَدُ بِهِ
قَالَ ابْنُ أُمِّ
إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضَعُّوْنِي
وَكَاذِبُوا يَفْتُلُونَنِي
فَلَا تُشْمِتْ بِيَ الْأَعْدَاءَ
وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ○
۱۵۱-قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِإِخِي
وَادْخُلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ
وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ۝

۱۵۲-إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْبُجُلَ
سِينًا لَهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
وَذِلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْكِرِينَ ○
۱۵۳-وَالَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا الصَّالَاتِ
تُحِبُّ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهَا وَأَمَلُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ○

1117. Moses was but human. Remembering the charge he had given to Aaron (vii. 142) he had a just grievance at the turn events had taken. But he did not wreak his vengeance on the Tablets of God's law by breaking them. He laid hands on his brother, and his brother at once explained.

1118. Aaron's speech is full of tenderness and regret. He addresses Moses as "son of my mother,"—an affectionate term. He explains how the turbulent people nearly killed him for resisting them. And he states in the clearest terms that the idolatry neither originated with him nor had his consent. In xx. 85 we are told that a fellow described as the Samiri had led them astray. We shall discuss this when we come to that passage.

1119. As Moses was convinced that his brother was guiltless, his wrath was turned to gentleness. He prayed for forgiveness—for himself and his brother: for himself because of his wrath and for his brother because he had been unable to suppress idolatry among his people. And like a true leader that he is, he identifies himself with his lieutenant for all that has happened. Even more, he identifies himself with his whole people in his prayer in verse 155 below. Herein, again, is a type of what the Holy Prophet Muhammad did for his people.

1120. The consequences were twofold: (1) spiritual, in that God's grace is withdrawn, and (2) even in the present life of this world, in that godly men also shun the sinner's company, and he is isolated.

154. When the anger of Moses
Was appeased, he took up
The Tablets: in the writing
Thereon was Guidance and Mercy
For such as fear their Lord.

155. And Moses chose seventy¹¹²¹
Of his people for Our place
Of meeting: when they
Were seized with violent

quaking,¹¹²²

He prayed: "Oh my Lord!
If it had been Thy Will
Thou couldst have destroyed,
Long before, both them
And me: wouldst Thou
Destroy us for the deeds
Of the foolish ones among us?
This is no more than¹¹²³
Thy trial: by it Thou caust
Whom Thou wilt to stray,¹¹²⁴
And Thou leadest whom
Thou wilt into the right path.
Thou art our Protector:
So forgive us and give us
Thy mercy; for Thou art
The best of those who forgive.

156. "And ordain for us
That which is good,
In this life
And in the Hereafter:
For we have turned unto Thee."
He said: "With My Punishment

١٥٤- وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُوسَى الْغَضَبُ
أَخَذَ الْوَلَدَةَ فِي نُسخَتِهَا هُدًى وَ
رَحْمَةً لِلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْهَبُونَ ○

١٥٥- وَلِاخْتَارَ مُوسَى قَوْمَهُ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلًا
لِإِيقَاتِنَا فَلَمَّا أَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ
قَالَ رَبِّ

لَوْ شِئْتَ أَهْلَكْتَهُم مِّن قَبْلِ
أَنْ يَكُونُوا لَنَا إِنَّمَا فَعَلْتَنَّا
إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا فِتْنَتُكَ

تُخَلِّ بِهَا مَن تَشَاءُ
وَتَهْدِي مَن تَشَاءُ

أَنْتَ وَلِيِّنَا

فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا

وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ ○

١٥٦- وَكَتَبْنَا لَنَا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
إِنَّا هُدْنَاكَ الْيَوْمَ قَالَ عَدِ ابْنِ

1121. Seventy of the elders were taken up to the Mount, but left at some distance from the place where God spoke to Moses. They were to be silent witnesses, but their faith was not yet complete, and they dared to say to Moses: "We shall never believe in thee until we see God in public" (ii. 55). They were dazed with thunder and lightning, and might have been destroyed but for God's mercy on the intercession of Moses

1122. *Rajfat*; violent quaking, earthquake. I take it to refer to the same event as is described by the word *Sā'iqat* in ii. 55, the thunder and lightning that shook the mountain-side.

1123. Moses was guiltless, but he identifies himself with his whole people, and intercedes with God on their behalf. He recognises that it was a trial, in which some of his people failed to stand the test. Such failure was worthy of punishment. But he pleads for mercy for such as erred from weakness and not from contumacy, and were truly repentant, although all who erred were in their several degrees worthy of punishment.

1124. Cf. ii. 26.

I visit whom I will;
But My Mercy extendeth ¹¹²⁵
To all things. That (Mercy)
I shall ordain for those
Who do right, practise
Regular charity, and believe
In Our Signs;—¹¹²⁶

157. "Those who follow the Apostle,
The unlettered Prophet,
Whom they find mentioned
In their own (Scriptures),—¹¹²⁷
In the Law and the Gospel;—
For he commands them
What is just and forbids them
What is evil; he allows
Them as lawful what is good
(And pure) and prohibits them
From what is bad (and impure);
He releases them
From their heavy burdens
And from the yokes ¹¹²⁸
That are upon them.
So it is those who believe
In him, honour him,
Help him, and follow the Light
Which is sent down with him,—¹¹²⁹

أَصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ أَشَاءَ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ
كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَأَلْتَهُمُ الْبَلَدِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ
وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝
١٥٤- الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ الرَّسُولَ
الْبَيْتِ الْأَرْفَعِ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا
عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ
يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ
وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ
إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ
وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ مَعَهُ ۚ

1125. God's mercy is in and for all things. All nature subserves a common purpose, which is for the good of all His creatures. Our faculties and our understandings are all instances of His grace and mercy. Each unit or factor among his creatures benefits from the others and receives them as God's mercy to itself; and in its turn, each contributes to the benefit of the others and is thus an instance of God's mercy to them. His mercy is universal and all pervasive; while His justice and punishment are reserved for those who swerve from His plan and (to use a mediæval juridical formula) go out of His Peace.

1126. The personal grace and mercy—and their opposite—are referred to the singular pronoun "I", while the impersonal Law, by which God's Signs operate in His universe, is referred to the plural pronoun of authority and dignity, "We".

1127. In this verse is a pre-figuring, to Moses, of the Arabian Apostle, the last and greatest of the apostles of God. Prophecies about him will be found in the Taurât and the Injil. In the reflex of the Taurât as now accepted by the Jews, Moses says: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me" (Deut. xviii. 15): the only Prophet who brought a Shar'at like that of Moses was Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, and he came of the house of Ismā'īl the brother of Isaac the father of Israel. In the reflex of the Gospel as now accepted by the Christians, Christ promised another Comforter (John xiv. 16): the Greek word *Paraclete* which the Christians interpret as referring to the Holy Spirit is by our Doctors taken to be *Periclyte*, which would be the Greek form of Aḥmad. See Q. lxi. 6.

1128. *Agāl*: plural of *gullus*, a yoke, an iron collar. In the formalism and exclusiveness of the Jews there were many restrictions which were removed by Islam, a religion of freedom in the faith of God, of universality in the variety of races, languages, manners and customs.

1129. *Light which is sent down with him*: the words are "with him", not "to him", emphasizing the fact that the Light which he brought illumines every one who has the privilege of joining his great and universal Fellowship.

It is they who will prosper." ¹¹⁸⁰

وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۝

C. 87.—With the advent of the Holy Apostle,
(vii. 158-171.) The light and guidance which he brought
For all mankind from God
Superseded the earlier Law for the Jews.
The good and the upright among them
Followed the new Light, but
The rest were scattered through the earth.

SECTION 20.

158. Say: "Oh men! I am sent¹¹⁸¹
Unto you all, as the Apostle
Of God, to Whom belongeth
The dominion of the heavens
And the earth: there is no god
But He: it is He that giveth
Both life and death. So believe
In God and His Apostle, So believe
The unlettered Prophet,¹¹⁸²
Who believeth in God
And His Words: follow him
That (so) ye may be guided.

۱۵۸- قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ
فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأَرْسَلِ
الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ
وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ۝

159. Of the people of Moses
There is a section
Who guide and do justice
In the light of truth.

۱۵۹- وَمِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى
أُمَّةٌ يَهْتَدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ۝

1180. Falāḥ=prosperity in its general sense as well as in its spiritual sense. In the general sense it means that right conduct is the only door to happiness and well being. In the spiritual sense it means that Faith and its fruits (right conduct) are the only gates to salvation.

1181. Our attention having been directed to various apostles, who were sent with missions to their several peoples, and in each of whose careers there is some pre-figurement of the life of the last and greatest of them, we are now asked to listen to the proclamation of Muḥammad's universal mission. We contemplate no longer, after this, partial truths. It is not now a question of saving Israel from the bondage of Egypt, nor teaching Midian the ethics of business, nor reclaiming the people of Lot from sexual sin or Thamūd from the sin of oppression in power, or 'Ad from arrogance and ancestor-worship. Now are set forth plainly the issues of Life and Death, the Message of the One Universal God to all mankind.

1182. "Unlettered," as applied to the Prophet here and in verse 157 above, has three special significations. (1) He was not versed in human learning; yet he was full of the highest wisdom, and had a most wonderful knowledge of the previous Scriptures. This was a proof of his inspiration. It was a miracle of the highest kind, a "Sign", which every one could test then, and every one can test now. (2) All organised human knowledge tends to be crystallised, to acquire a partial bias or flavour of some "school" of thought. The highest Teacher had to be free from any such taint, just as a clean slate is necessary if a perfectly clear and bold message has to be written on it. (3) In iii. 20 and lxii. 2, the epithet is applied to the Pagan Arabs, because, before the advent of Islam, they were unlearned. That the last and greatest of the Prophets should arise among them, and they and their language be made the vehicle of the new, full, and universal light, has also a meaning, which is explained in C. 12-15.

160. We divided them into twelve
Tribes 1188

Or nations. We directed
Moses by inspiration,
When his (thirsty) people asked
Him for water: "Strike the rock
With thy staff": out of it
There gushed forth twelve

Each man knew his own place
For water. We gave them
The shade of clouds, and sent
Down to them manna and quails,
Saying : " Eat of the good things
We have provided for you ":
(But they rebelled) ; to Us
They did no harm, but
They harmed their own souls.¹¹³⁴

161. And remember it was
Said to them :
"Dwell in this town
And eat¹¹⁸⁵ therein as ye wish,
But say the word of humility
And enter the gate
In a posture of humility :
We shall forgive you
Your faults ; We shall increase
The portion of those who do
good."

162. But the transgressors among them
 Changed the word from that
 Which had been given them;
 So we sent on them
 A plague from heaven.
 For that they repeatedly
 transgressed.¹¹²⁶

SECTION 21.

163. Ask them concerning the town
Standing close by the sea.
Behold! they transgressed

١٧٠- وَقَطَعْنَاهُمْ اثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ أَسْبَاطًا
أَسْبَاطًا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ إِذِ اسْتَعَضُّهُ
قَوْمُهُ أَنَّ اصْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَمَرَ
فَالْبَحْسَتُ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا
قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مِشْرَبَهُمْ
وَوَضَعْنَا عَلَىٰهُمْ الْعَمَامَ
وَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَكَ وَالسَّلَوَىٰ
كُلًّا مِنْ طَیِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَنُّونَا
وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ○

١٦١- وَإِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ اسْكُنُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ
وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ
وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ
وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا
نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَتَكُمْ
سَيِّئِينَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ○
١٦٢- فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ

قَوْلَا غَيْدَ الَّذِي
قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزًا مِّنَ
السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَظْلُمُونَ ۝

١٦٣- وَسَأَلَهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ
حَاضِرَةً الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ

1133. We now come to some incidents in Jewish history, which have been referred to in ii. 57-60. Here they have special reference to their bearing on the times when early Islam was preached. The Twelve Tribes and the parable drawn from them have been explained in n. 73 to ii. 60.

1134. Cf. ii, 57 and n.

1135. As in vii. 19, we may construe "eat" here to mean not only eating literally, but enjoying the good things of life.

1136. Cf. ii. 58-59, and n. 72. The story is here told by way of parable for the times of Islam. Hence we have a few verbal changes: e.g., "dwell in this town" instead of "enter this town," etc.

In the matter of the Sabbath.¹¹⁸⁷
 For on the day of their Sabbath
 Their fish did come to them,
 Openly holding up their heads,
 But on the day they had
 No Sabbath, they came not :
 Thus did We make a trial
 Of them, for they were
 Given to transgression.

فِي السَّبْتِ إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ حَيْثَا تَأْتِيهِمْ
 سَبْيِهِمْ شُرْعًا
 وَيَوْمَ لَا يَسْتَوُونَ ۚ لَا تَأْتِيهِمْ
 كَذَلِكَ تَبْلُوهُمْ
 بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ○

164. When some of them said :

"Why do ye preach
 To a people whom God
 Will destroy or visit
 With a terrible

punishment ?"—¹¹³⁸

Said the preachers : "To discharge
 Our duty to your Lord,
 And perchance they may fear
 Him."

۱۶۴- وَإِذْ قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِّنْهُمْ
 لِمَ تَعِظُونَ قَوْمًا ۚ اللَّهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ
 أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا
 قَالُوا مُعَذِّبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
 وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ○

165. When they disregarded the
 warnings

That had been given them,
 We rescued those who forbade
 Evil ; but We visited
 The wrong-doers with a
 Grievous punishment, because
 They were given to transgression.

۱۶۵- فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ
 أَنجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ السُّوءِ
 وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
 بَعْدَ آبَائِهِمْ بِإِثْمِهِمْ ۚ كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ○

166. When in their insolence
 They transgressed (all) prohibitions,
 We said to them :
 "Be ye apes,
 Despised and rejected."¹¹³⁹

۱۶۶- فَلَمَّا عَتَوْا عَنْ مَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ
 قُلْنَا لَهُمْ
 كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ ○

1137. Cf. ii. 65 and n. Fishing, like every other activity, was prohibited to Israel on the Sabbath day. As this practice was usually observed, the fish used to come up with a sense of security to their water channels or pools openly on the Sabbath day, but not on other days when fishing was open. This was a great temptation to the law-breakers, which they could not resist. Some of their men of piety protested, but it had no effect. When their transgressions, which, we may suppose, extended to other commandments, passed beyond bounds, the punishment came. They were despised among their own people, and became like apes, without law and without order or decency.

1138. There are always people who wonder, no doubt sincerely, what good it is to preach to the wicked. The answer is given to them here : (1) every man who sees evil must speak out against it ; it is his duty and responsibility to God ; (2) there is always a chance that the warning may have effect and save a precious soul. This passage has a special meaning for the times when our Holy Prophet was preaching in Mecca, apparently without results. But it applies to all times.

1139. Cf. ii. 65, n. 79.

167. Behold! thy Lord did declare¹¹⁴⁰

That He would send
Against them, to the Day
Of judgment, those who would
Afflict them with grievous
Penalty. Thy Lord is quick
In retribution, but He is also
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

168. We broke them up
Into sections on this earth.¹¹⁴¹
There are among them some
That are the righteous, and some
That are the opposite.
We have tried them
With both prosperity and
adversity :

In order that they
Might turn (to Us).

169. After them succeeded
An (evil) generation : they
Inherited the Book, but
They chose (for themselves)¹¹⁴²
The vanities of this world,
Saying (for excuse):
“(Everything)
Will be forgiven us.”
(Even so), if similar vanities
Came their way, they would
(Again) seize them.
Was not the Covenant¹¹⁴³
Of the Book taken from them,
That they would not
Ascribe to God anything

۱۶۷- وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكَ لِيَسْبَعَنَ عَلَيْهِمُ
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ
مَنْ كَسَبَتْهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَسَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ
وَرَأَى الْغَفُورُ مَرْحِيمٌ ○

۱۶۸- وَطَعْنَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْمًا
وَمِنْهُمْ الطَّيِّبُونَ
وَمِنْهُمْ دُونَ ذَلِكَ
وَبَلَوْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ
وَالشَّيَاطِئِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ○

۱۶۹- فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ
وَرِثُوا الْكِتَابَ
يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَى
وَيَقُولُونَ سَيُغْفَرُ لَنَا
وَأَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَرَضٌ مِثْلَهُ
يَأْخُذُوهُ
أَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِيثَاقُ الْكِتَابِ
أَنْ لَا يَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ

1140. See Deut. xi. 28: "A curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day"; also Deut. xxviii. 49; "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand"; and many other passages.

1141. The dispersal of the Jews is a great fact in the world's history. Nor has their persecution ended yet, nor is it likely to end as far as we can foresee.

1142. Merely inheriting a Book, or doing lip service to it, does not make a nation righteous. If they succumb to the temptations of the world, their hypocrisy becomes all the more glaring. "High finance" is one of these temptations. Cf. also ii. 80: "the Fire shall not touch us except for a few numbered days": and ii. 89, about their blasphemous self-sufficiency.

1143. Cf. Exod. xix. 5-8; xxiv. 3; xxxiv. 27; and many other passages.

But the truth? And they
Study what is in the Book.
But best for the righteous
Is the Home in the Hereafter.
Will ye not understand?

170. As to those who hold fast
By the Book and establish
Regular Prayer,—never
Shall we suffer the reward
Of the righteous to perish.

171. When We shook the Mount
Over them, as if it had been
A canopy, and they thought
It was going to fall on them
(We said): "Hold firmly¹¹⁴⁴
To what We have given you,
And bring (ever) to remembrance
What is therein;¹¹⁴⁵
Perchance ye may fear God."

إِلَّا الْحَقَّ وَدَرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ
وَالَّذِينَ الْأَخْرَجُوا خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ
۝ وَالَّذِينَ يُمَسِّكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ
وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ
۝ وَإِذْ نُنَقِّنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ
كَأَنَّهُ ظِلَّةٌ وَظَلُّوا أُنُكَّهُ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ
خُلِدْنَا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ
وَأَذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ۝

- C. 88.—Mankind have the nature of good
(vil. 172-206.) Created within them: yet doth God
By His Signs keep up a constant
Reminder to men of His holy Names.
Those who err scarce realise
How gradually they fall into sin.
Their respite has a term; the doom
Must come, and it may be on a sudden.
So humbly draw nigh to the Lord,
Declare His glory, and rejoice in His service.

SECTION 22.

172. ~~When~~ thy Lord drew
forth¹¹⁴⁶
From the Children of Adam—

۝ وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ

1144. Cf. ii. 63 and n.

1145. *Therein*—in the Book or Revelation, in "what We have given you."

1146. This passage has led to differences of opinion in interpretation. Does it mean that each individual in the posterity of Adam had a separate existence from the time of Adam, and that a Covenant was taken from all of them, which is binding accordingly on each individual? That question really does not arise. The words in the text refer to the descendants of the Children of Adam, i.e., to all humanity, born or unborn, without any limit of time. Adam's seed carries on the existence of Adam, and succeeds to his spiritual heritage. Humanity as such has a corporate aspect. Humanity has been given by God certain powers and faculties, whose possession creates on our side special spiritual obligations, which we must faithfully discharge; see v. 1, and n. 682. These obligations may from a legal point of view be considered as arising from implied Covenants. In the preceding verse (vil. 171) a reference was made to the implied Covenant of the Jewish nation. Now we consider the implied Covenant of the whole of humanity, for the Holy Apostle's mission was world-wide.

From their loins—
 Their descendants, and made them
 Testify concerning themselves,
 (saying):

"Am I not your Lord
 (Who cherishes and sustains
 you)?"—

They said: "Yea!
 We do testify!"¹¹⁴⁷ (This), lest
 Ye should say on the Day
 Of Judgment: "Of this we
 Were never (duly) warned":

173. Or lest ye should say:
 "Our fathers before us
 May have taken false gods,
 But we are (their) descendants
 After them: wilt thou then
 Destroy us because of the deeds
 Of men who were futile?"¹¹⁴⁸

174. Thus do We explain
 The Signs in detail;
 And perchance they may turn
 (Unto Us).

175. Relate to them the story¹¹⁴⁹
 Of the man to whom
 We sent Our Signs,
 But he passed them by:

مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ
 وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ

أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ

قَالُوا بَلَىٰ

شَهِدْنَا

أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

۝۱۴۳ أَوْ تَقُولُوا

إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ

وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ

أَتَقْتُلُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْبَاطِلُونَ

۝۱۴۴ وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ الْأَلْوَانِ

وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

۝۱۴۵ وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ

آيَاتِنَا فَأَسْلَفَ مِنْهَا

1147. The Covenant is completed in this way. We acknowledge that God is our Creator, Cherisher, and Sustainer; therefore we acknowledge our duty to Him: when we so testify concerning ourselves, the obligation is "as it were assumed by us; for it follows from our very nature when it is pure and uncorrupted.

1148. The latent faculties in man are enough to teach him the distinction between good and evil, to warn him of the dangers that beset his life. But to awaken and stimulate them, a personal appeal is made to each individual through the "still small voice" within him. This in its uncorrupted state acknowledges the truth and metaphorically swears its Covenant with God. There is, therefore, no excuse for any individual to say, either (8) that he was not duly warned or (2) that he should not be punished for the sins of his fathers, because his punishment (if any) comes from his personal responsibility and is for his own rejection of faith and the higher spiritual influences.

1149. Commentators differ whether this story or parable refers to a particular individual, and if so, to whom. The story of Balaam the seer, who was called out by Israel's enemies to curse Israel, but who blessed Israel instead, (Num. xxii. xxiii, xxiv) is quite different. It is better to take the parable in a general sense. There are men, of talents and position, to whom great opportunities of spiritual insight come, but they perversely pass them by. Satan sees his opportunity and catches them up. Instead of rising higher in the spiritual world, their selfish and worldly desires and ambitions pull them down, and they are lost.

So Satan followed him up,
And he went astray.

176. If it had been Our Will,
We should have elevated him
With Our Signs; but he
Inclined to the earth,
And followed his own vain
desires.¹¹⁵⁰

His similitude is that
Of a dog: if you attack
Him, he lolls out his tongue,
Or if you leave him alone,
He (still) lolls out his tongue.¹¹⁵¹
That is the similitude
Of those who reject Our Signs;
So relate the story;
Perchance they may reflect.

177. Evil as an example are
People who reject Our Signs
And wrong their own souls.

178. Whom God doth guide,—
He is on the right path:
Whom He rejects from His
guidance,—
Such are the persons who
perish.¹¹⁵²

179. Many are the Jinns and men
We have made for Hell:
They have hearts wherewith they
Understand not, eyes
wherewith¹¹⁵³

فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْعَوْنِ ○

١٧٦- وَكُونُوا لِرِغْبَائِهِمْ نَبَا
وَلَكِنَّهُمْ أَحَلَّدُوا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ
وَالْتَبَعُوا هَوَاهُ ○

فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ ○
إِنْ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ
أَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثْ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ
الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ○
فَانْصُرْ أَقْصَصَ الْقَصَصِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ○

١٧٧- سَاءَ مَثَلًا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
بِآيَاتِنَا وَأَنْفُسَهُمْ كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ ○

١٧٨- مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِى
وَمَنْ يَضِلْ
فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ○

١٧٩- وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا الْجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا
مِنَ الْبَشَرِ وَالْإِنْسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا
يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ

1150. Notice the contrast between the exalted spiritual honours which they would have received from God if they had followed His Will, and the earthly desires which eventually bring them low to the position of beasts and worse.

1151. The dog, especially in the hot weather, lolls out his tongue, whether he is attacked and pursued and is tired, or he is left alone. It is part of his nature to slobber. So with the man who rejects God. Whether he is warned or left alone, he continues to throw out his dirty saliva. The injury he will do will be to his own soul. But there may be infection in his evil example. So we must protect others. And we must never give up hope of his own amendment. So we must continue to warn him and make him think.

1152. Those who reject God will be deprived of God's grace and guidance. His Mercy is always open for sincere repentance. But with each step downwards, they go lower and lower, until they perish.

1153. Cf. ii. 18. Though they have apparently all the faculties of reason and perception, they have so deadened them that those faculties do not work, and they go headlong into Hell. They are, as it were, made for Hell.

They see not, and ears wherewith
They hear not. They are
Like cattle,—nay more
Misguided: for they
Are heedless (of warning).

180. **THE** most beautiful names ¹¹⁵⁴

Belong to God:
So call on Him by them;
But shun such men as
Use profanity in His names:
What they do will soon
Be requited.

181. Of those We have created
Are people who direct
(Others) with Truth,
And dispense justice therewith.

SECTION 23.

182. **THE** those who reject Our Signs,
We shall gradually visit
With punishment, in ways
They perceive not;

183. Respite will I grant
Unto them: for My scheme
Is strong (and unfailing).

184. Do they not reflect?
Their Companion is not seized ¹¹⁵⁵

لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ
بِهَا أَوَلَيْكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ
بَلْ هُمْ أَصْلٌ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ ○

١٨٠- وَبَلِّغُوا الْأَسْمَاءَ الْحُسْنَى
فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذُرُوا الَّذِينَ
يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ
سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ○

١٨١- وَمِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا أُمَّةً يَهْدُونَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ۞

١٨٢- وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُم مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ○

١٨٣- وَأَمْلِي لَهُمْ
إِن كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ ○

١٨٤- أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا لِمَا بِصَاحِبِهِمْ

1154. As we contemplate God's nature, we can use the most beautiful names we can think of, to express His attributes. There are hundreds of such attributes. In the opening Sūra, we have these indicated in a few comprehensive words, such as *Rahmān* (most Gracious), *Raḥīm* (most Merciful), *Rabb-ul 'ālamīn* (Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds). Our bringing such names to remembrance is part of our Prayer and Praise. But we must not associate with people who use God's names profanely, or so as to suggest anything derogatory to His dignity or His unity. Cf. xvii. 110.

1155. *Their companion*, i.e., the Holy Apostle, who lived with and amongst them. He was accused of madness because he behaved differently from them. He had no selfish ambitions; he was always true, in thought, word, and deed; he was kind and considerate to the weak, and was not dazzled by worldly power or wealth or position; he was undeterred by fear of the strong, the mockery of the cynics, the bitterness of the evil, or the indifference of the heedless. That is why he stood out boldly against wrong: he did not mince his words, and his warnings were not mealy-mouthed.

With madness : he is but
A perspicuous warner.¹¹⁵⁶

185. Do they see nothing
In the government of the heavens
And the earth and all
That God hath created ?¹¹⁵⁷
(Do they not see) that
It may well be that
Their term is nigh
Drawing to an end ?
In what Message after this
Will they then believe ?

186. To such as God rejects
From His guidance, there can be
No guide : He will
Leave them in their trespasses,
Wandering in distraction.¹¹⁵⁸

187. They ask thee about
The (final) Hour--when
Will be its appointed time ?
Say : " The knowledge thereof
Is with my Lord (alone) :
None but He can reveal
As to when it will occur.¹¹⁵⁹
Heavy were its burden through
The heavens and the earth.
Only, all of a sudden
Will it come to you."
They ask thee as if thou

فَرِحْتُمْ بِمَوْتِكُمْ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ٥

هَؤُلَاءِ لَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
وَأَنْ عَلَيَّ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدْ أَقْتَرَبَ أَجَلُهُمْ
فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ
بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ ٥

١٨٦- مَنْ يُضِلَّ اللَّهُ
فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ
وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ٥

١٨٧- يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ
أَيَّانَ مُرْسِمُهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا
عِنْدَ رَبِّي لَا يُجَلِّيهَا لِوَقْتِهَا
إِلَّا مَوْتٌ تَنَالَتْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً
يَسْأَلُونَكَ كَالَّذِينَ

يَقُولُونَ
لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً

1156. *Mubīn* : perspicuous. The reason why I have not used a simpler word, such as "plain" or "clear" is explained in n. 716 to v. 17. Muṣṭafā's sermons were not polite reminders, with an eye to the flattery of weaknesses in high places or national vanities or crowd passions. They brought out every foible into the glare of light, by a fiery eloquence fed by inspiration from God.

1157. An appeal to God's most wonderful universe should at once convince a thinking mind of man's nothingness, and God's power, glory, and goodness. Man's term here is fleeting. If he is not warned by the great Signs, and the Messages which call his attention to them, is he capable of any faith at all ?

1158. Cf. ii. 15. If God's light is removed, the best of them can only wander hitlier and thither, like blind men, in distraction.

1159. The fact of its coming is a certainty : the exact time appointed for it is not revealed by God. If it were, it would be so momentous as to disturb our thoughts and life. It would be a heavy burden to us. Our duty is to be prepared for it at all times. It will come when we least expect it. In the present Gospels Jesus says the same thing : he does not know the Hour, but it will come suddenly. "But of that day and that Hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray : for ye know not when the time is," (Mark xiii. 32-33.)

Wert eager in search thereof :¹¹⁶⁰
 Say : " The knowledge thereof
 Is with God (alone),
 But most men know not."

حَقِيقٌ عَنْهَا قُلُوبُ إِنَّا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
 وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

188. Say : " I have no power
 Over any good or harm
 To myself except as God
 Willetth. If I had knowledge
 Of the unseen, I should have
 Multiplied all good, and no evil
 Should have touched me :
 I am but a warner,
 And a bringer of glad tidings
 To those who have faith."¹¹⁶¹

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا
 ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ
 لَا سَكَنَ لُحُوتِي مِنَ الْخَيْرِ
 وَمَا مَسْكُونِي الشُّرُوءُ إِنَّا إِنَّا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ
 وَبَشِيرٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝

SECTION 24.

189. ~~It~~ is He Who created
 You from a single person,
 And made his mate
 Of like nature,¹¹⁶² in order
 That he might dwell with her
 (In love). When they are
 United, she bears a light
 Burden and carries it about
 (Unnoticed). When she grows
 Heavy, they both pray¹¹⁶³
 To God their Lord, (saying) :
 " If Thou givest us
 A goodly child,¹¹⁶⁴

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ
 وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا
 فَلَمَّا تَغَطَّيَا
 حَمَلَتْ حَمْلًا خَفِيًّا
 فَمَرَّتْ بِهِ
 فَلَمَّا أَفْضَلَتْ
 دَعَا اللَّهَ رَبَّهُمَا لَئِنْ آتَيْتَنَا صَالِحًا

1160. *Hafī* is usually construed to mean : "eager or anxious in search of" : the preposition following here is *an*—concerning, about. Some commentators (including Rāḡib) understand it in this passage to mean "well-acquainted." In xix. 47, with the preposition *bi* following it, it signifies "well-disposed to," "favourable to, good to, kind to."

1161. A warner to all, and a bringer of glad tidings to those who have faith, because they will profit by the glad tidings. As every one is invited to faith, the glad tidings are offered to all, but they are not necessarily accepted by all.

1162 Cf. iv. 1, and n. 504, where the construction is explained.

1163. The mystery of the physical birth of man, as it affects the father and the mother, only touches the imagination of the parents in the later stages when the child is yet unborn and yet the life stirs within the body of the expectant mother. The coming of the new life is a solemn thing, and is fraught with much hope as well as much unknown risk to the mother herself. The parents in their anxiety turn to God. If this feeling of solemnity, hope, and looking towards God were maintained after birth, all would be well for the parents as well as for the rising generation. But the attitude changes, as the verses following show.

1164. *goodly* : *ḡālīk* : includes the following ideas : sound in body and mind ; healthy ; righteous, of good moral disposition.

We vow we shall
(Ever) be grateful."

190. But when He giveth them
A goodly child, they ascribe ¹¹⁶⁵
To others a share in the gift
They have received:
But God is exalted
High above the partners
They ascribe to Him.

191. Do they indeed ascribe
To Him as partners things
That can create nothing,
But are themselves created?

192. No aid can they give them,
Nor can they aid themselves!

193. If ye call them to guidance,
They will not obey:
For you it is the same
Whether ye call them
Or ye hold your peace! ¹¹⁶⁶

194. Verily those whom ye
Call upon besides God
Are servants like unto you: ¹¹⁶⁷
Call upon them, and let them
Listen to your prayer,
If ye are (indeed) truthful!

195. Have they feet to walk with?
Or hands to lay hold with?

لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْفَكِرِينَ ○

١٩٠- فَلَمَّا آتَاهُمَا صَالِحًا

جَعَلَا لَهُ شُرَكَاءَ

فِينَا آتَاهُمَا

فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ○

١٩١- يُشْرِكُونَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئًا

وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ○

١٩٢- وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا

وَلَا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ ○

١٩٣- وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى

لَا يَسْتَمِعُواكُمْ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

أَدْعَوْتُهُمْ أَمْ أَنْتُمْ صَامِتُونَ ○

١٩٤- إِنْ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

عِبَادٌ أَمْثَلُكُمْ فَادْعُوهُمْ

فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا إِلَيْكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ○

١٩٥- أَلَهُمْ أَرْجُلٌ يَمْشُونَ بِهَا

أَمْ لَهُمْ آيْدٍ يَبْطِشُونَ بِهَا

1165. When the child is born, the parents forget that it is a precious gift of God,—a miracle of Creation, which should lift their minds up to the higher things of God. Instead, their gradual familiarity with the new life makes them connect it with many superstitious ideas or rites and ceremonies, or they take it as a matter of course, as a little plaything of the material world. This leads to idolatry or false worship, or the setting up of false standards, in derogation of the dignity of God.

1166. When false worship takes root, the teacher of Truth finds much to discourage him. As far as he is concerned, it seems as if he has produced no effect. Yet his duty is to continue his work, in the spirit of verse 199 below, forgiving all opposition, teaching what is right, and not joining the ignorant in their attitude of doubt and indecision.

1167. False gods, whether idols, or deified men, or ideas and superstitions, have no existence of their own, independent of God's creation. They are God's creatures, and like servants are subject to His authority. Deified men are not real men, but false ideas of men. They cannot help themselves; how can they help others?

Or eyes to see with ?
Or ears to hear with ?
Say : " Call all your gods,¹¹⁶⁸
Scheme (your worst) against me,
And give me no respite !

196. " For my Protector is God,
Who revealed the Book
(From time to time),
And He will choose
And befriend the righteous.

197. " But those ye call upon
Besides Him, are unable
To help you, and indeed
To help themselves."

198. If thou callest them
To guidance, they hear not.
Thou wilt see them
Looking at thee, but
They see not.¹¹⁶⁹

199. ~~Is~~old to forgiveness ;
Command what is right ;
But turn away from the
ignorant.¹¹⁷⁰

200. If a suggestion from Satan
Assail thy (mind),¹¹⁷¹

أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ يَصْطَرُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ
أَذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا قُلِ ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ
تَزْكُرُونَ فَلَا تَنْظُرُونَ

١٩٦- وَإِنَّ إِلَهِي اللَّهُ
الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ
وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى الصَّالِحِينَ

١٩٧- وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا
يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَا أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَنْصَرُونَ

١٩٨- وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى
لَا يَسْمَعُوا وَتَرَاهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ
وَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

١٩٩- خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ
وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

٢٠٠- وَإِذَا يَأْتِيكَ الْغَتَاكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ

1168. Here is a test and a challenge. If the false gods had any power or even existence, collect them all together, and, says the man of God, " Let them do their worst against me." They cannot; because the whole thing is based on a superstition and a chimæra.

1169. The beauty and righteousness of Muṣṭafā's life were acknowledged on all hands, until he received the mission to preach and to fight against evil. What happened then? Evil erected barricades for itself. It had eyes, but it refused to see. It had ears, but it refused to hear. It had intelligence, but it blocked up its channels of understanding. Even now, after thirteen centuries and a half, a life of unexampled purity, probity, justice, and righteousness is seen in false lights by blind detractors!

1170. God comforts the Apostle and directs his mind to three precepts: (1) to forgive injuries, insults, and persecution; (2) to continue to declare the faith that was in him, and not only to declare it, but to act up to it in all his dealings with friends and foes; (3) to pay no attention to ignorant fools, who raised doubts or difficulties, hurled taunts or reproaches, or devised plots to defeat the truth: they were to be ignored and passed by, not to be engaged in fights and fruitless controversies, or conciliated by compromises.

1171. Even a man of God is but human. He might think that revenge or retaliation, or a little tactful silence when evil stalks abroad, or some compromise with ignorance, might be best for the cause. He is to reject such suggestions.

Seek refuge with God;
For He heareth and knoweth
All things.

201. Those who fear God,
When a thought of evil
From Satan assaults them,
Bring God to remembrance,
When lo! they see (aright) !¹¹⁷²

202. But their brethren (the evil
ones)¹¹⁷³
Plunge them deeper into error,
And never relax (their efforts).

203. If thou bring them not
A revelation,¹¹⁷⁴ they say :
" Why hast thou not
Got it together ? "
Say : " I but follow
What is revealed to me
From my Lord :
This is (nothing but)
Lights from your Lord,¹¹⁷⁵
And Guidance, and Mercy,
For any who have Faith."

204. When the Qurān is read,
Listen to it with attention,

فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ
اِنَّهُ سَيَعْلَمُ عَلَيْنَا ۝

۲۰۱- اِنَّ الدِّينَ اتَّقُوا
اِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ
تَذَكَّرُوْا ۚ اِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُوْنَ ۝

۲۰۲- وَاِخْوَانُهُمْ يَبْتَغُوْنَ اَنْ يُضِلُّوْهُمۡ
فِي السَّبِيْلِ ۚ وَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ۝

۲۰۳- وَاِذَا لَمْ تَأْتِهِمۡ بِآيٰتٍ
قَالُوْا لَوْلَا جِئْتِنَاۤ اٰیٰتًا
قُلْ اِنَّمَا اَنْتُمْ مَّارِیُوسُوْنَ اِلٰیٰی مِنْ رَبِّیْ
هٰذَا بَصٰۤاۤیُۡرٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ
وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ
لِّعِبَادٍ یُّذِکِّرُوْنَ ۝

۲۰۴- وَاِذَا قُرِیَ الْقُرْاٰنُ فَاسْمِعُوْا لَهُ

1172. God protects His own, as no one else can. He is the sure refuge — and the only one—for men of faith. If we are confused or angry, being blinded by this world, He will open our eyes.

1173. We go back to consider the ungodly, whom we left at verse 198, in order to be taught our behaviour towards evil. The forces of evil never relax their efforts to draw their "brethren" (those who go into their family) deeper and deeper into the mire of sin and destruction.

1174. "Sign" here, I think, means specially an Āyat of the Holy Qurān. The infidels did not believe in revelation, and used to taunt the Holy Apostle, as much as to say that he used to put together words and promulgate them as revelation. The answer is contained in the sentence that follows. No human composition could contain the beauty, power, and spiritual insight of the Qurān. Without inspiration it is impossible to suppose that a man, with or without literary and philosophic training, could produce such a book as the Qurān.

1175. "Lights" : eyes, faculty of spiritual insight. The revelation is for us (1) spiritual eyes, (2) guidance, and (3) mercy. (1) is the highest in degree : just as a blind man, if he is given eyes and the faculty of sight, is at once removed into an entirely new world, so those Who can reach the stage of spiritual insight pass into and become citizens of a wholly new spiritual World. (2) is next in degree ; the man of the world can act up to the teaching about right conduct, and prepare for the Hereafter. (3) is the Mercy of God, free to every one, saint and sinner, who sincerely believes and puts his trust in God.

And hold your peace :
That ye may receive Mercy.

205. And do thou (oh reader !)
Bring thy Lord to remembrance
In thy (very) soul,
With humility and in reverence,
Without loudness in words,
In the mornings and evenings ;
And be not thou
Of those who are unheedful.

206. Those who are near ¹¹⁷⁶
To thy Lord, disdain not
To do Him worship :
They celebrate His praises,
And bow down before Him. ¹¹⁷⁷

وَأَنصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ○

٢٠٥- وَالذِّكْرُ وَكَانَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَ
خِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ
بِالْغَدْوِ وَالْإِصْصَالِ
وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ○

٢٠٦- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ
وَيُسَبِّحُونَكَ وَلَهُ يُسْجَدُونَ ۝



1176. The higher you are in spiritual attainment, the more is your desire and your opportunity to serve and worship your Lord and Cherisher and the Lord and Cherisher of all the worlds ; and the greater is your pride in that service and that worship.

1177. At this stage a *Sijda* or prostration is indicated, as symbolical of our humble acceptance of the privilege of serving and worshipping God, — a fitting close to a *Sara* in which we are led, through a contemplation of the stories of the Messengers of God, to the meaning of revelation and its relation to our moral and spiritual progress.

APPENDIX IV.

Egyptian Chronology and Israel (see vii. 104, n. 1072).

In order to get some idea of the comparative chronology of Egypt and Israel, we must first consider what data we have for Egyptian chronology. Israel's surviving records date from a time many centuries later than Israel's contact with Egypt. On the other hand Egypt's records in monuments, inscriptions, tombs, etc., are rich and absolutely reliable as far as they go.

Of the surviving old civilizations, Egypt and China go back furthest in time with historical material. Egypt has the more interest for us, because geographically she was centrally situated, and she influenced and was influenced by almost every important cultural movement in Asia, Europe, and Africa. Nothing happened in Mediterranean history that had not some points of contact with Egypt.

The first broad division in Egyptian chronology is between the pre-Dynastic and the Dynastic periods. The pre-Dynastic period is all pre-history. But recent researches have thrown a great deal of light on the culture of that period, and we know many more details about the arts and tools of that period in Egypt than we do for the corresponding periods of pre-history in other countries.

With the first Egyptian Dynasty of rulers begins the Dynastic period. What were the Egyptian Dynasties, and why is so much prominence given to them in Egyptian chronology? The reason is that though we can form a graphic idea of the sequence of events and in many cases of the details of events, arts and crafts, manners and customs, cults and ceremonies, and social and economic conditions in the Dynastic period, we are not yet able, except for occasional and isolated glimpses, to give any accurate figures of early dates to connect them with our chronology B.C. On the other hand we have abundant materials to justify us in placing certain events or personages or ideas in some division of the Dynastic scheme. We can say that such and such ideas held sway under the 18th Dynasty or that such and such invasion, outwards or inwards, took place at the close of the 14th Dynasty.

The Dynastic scheme rests mainly on the lists and fragments preserved from the writings of one Manetho, an Egyptian priest and annalist, who lived under Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II (B.C. 313-246), the inheritors of the Egyptian portion of Alexander's Empire. For his Egyptian history in Greek he had access to Egyptian records. His scheme of Dynasties therefore supplies a rough chronological frame-work into which can be fitted our ever-increasing detailed knowledge derived from Egyptian monuments, tombs, and excavations. His first Dynasty begins with the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, but its actual date B.C. has been placed at between such wide margins as 5500 B.C. and 3300 B.C.

The two Egypts may be considered distinct ethnical and perhaps geographical divisions, which tend to assimilate when they are united politically, but whose physical

characteristics are different, as also their outlook when there is political division. Lower Egypt looks to the Mediterranean, and its population is mixed, containing almost all the Mediterranean and Arab elements, while Upper Egypt looks to interior Africa (Nubia, Sudan, Abyssinia, etc.), and its population tends to have more and more African characteristics. The whole of Egypt has had a ribbon development, the population and cultivation being confined to the banks of the Nile. Without the Nile Egypt would be just a desert forming a link in the long chain of tropical and sub-tropical deserts stretching from the Sahara, the Libyan desert, the Arabian deserts, through the Persian, Baluchistan, Sindh, and Rajputana deserts, to the Turki and Gobi deserts in Central Asia. But Upper Egypt is purely a long irregular line along the banks of the Nile, while Lower Egypt has the broad fan-like delta in which the many mouths of the Nile run into a very irregular coast-line extending over about 200 miles. Lower Egypt had (and has) much marsh-land, and its low-lying configuration was subject to many physical changes, in the same way as invasions and foreign immigrations gave its population a less stable character. Its cities, such as Sais and Tanis (Zoan), were also less stable in character, and Memphis (near the site of modern Cairo) had to be just above the Delta. On the other hand the Capitals in Upper Egypt, such as Thebes (or No), with their magnificent temples and tombs were safe above Nile waters in the highest inundations until the modern dam of Asuān was built many miles above them. The boundary between Upper and Lower Egypt was never clearly defined, because in spite of frequent interruptions in the unity of the country, the identification of Egypt with the Nile made the unity of Egypt a political and economic necessity. The present boundary of Lower Egypt is just south of Cairo, making Lower Egypt include just the Delta. The tract between Cairo and Assiut is sometimes called Middle Egypt and is distinguished from the rest of Upper Egypt, which is higher up the river.

There being such wide variations in the estimate of ancient dates by competent authorities, the only practicable course is to refer ancient events to Dynasties according to Manetho's scheme. In the later dates it is sometimes possible to express a date in approximate figures B.C., but such figures are uncertain, whereas the sequence of Dynasties may be taken to be a stable fact in Egyptian history, although some of Manetho's material, when it can be tested, has proved to be inaccurate. But we have only Manetho second-hand. The inaccuracies may be due not to Manetho but to his transmitters. Thirty-one such Dynasties are reckoned, and they may be grouped into Periods as follows:—

I. The Old Kingdom, Dynasties I to VIII, including (a) the first three Dynasties, with a new orientation in Egyptian Art, and (b) Dynasties IV to VI, the Pyramid Period, during which the Great Pyramid and the second and third Pyramids of Ghizeh were built. The capital now came to Lower Egypt, to the site of Memphis, near modern Cairo.

II. The Middle Kingdom, Dynasties IX to XVII. In Dynasties IX and X the centre of gravity moved from Memphis in Lower Egypt to Middle Egypt. In the XIIth Dynasty many of the great monuments of and near Thebes (Karnak, Luxor, etc.), were constructed. Perhaps the movement higher up the river was necessitated by foreign invasions in Lower Egypt. Dynasties XV to XVII are called the Hyksos Period,

When a Syrian Dynasty was established in Lower Egypt, with a sort of lordship over the native Dynasties of Upper Egypt, and international connections in other Mediterranean countries. We shall presently speak of the Hyksos Pharaohs, who have been placed in the 17th, 18th, and even 26th century B.C.

III. The New Empire, Dynasties XVIII to XX, crowded with events. The dates now begin to be more definite: the period may be placed between about 1580 B.C. and about 1200 B.C. The foreign Hyksos were driven out; the empire was extended to Syria and Nubia; perhaps even the Euphrates was reached. Some of the most wonderful works of Egyptian art date from this period.

IV. The Dynasties of the Delta, Dynasties XXI to XXXI, including a Dynasty at Sais (on one of the western branches of the Deltaic Nile). But Assyrian and Persian invasions were now weakening the power of Egypt. The dates now become more certain. The XXIst Dynasty was roughly about 1100 B.C. The XXVIIth Dynasty was ended by the invasion of the Persians under Cambyses in 525 B.C. The Persians held sway (with Egyptian local dynasties under them) until the XXXIst Dynasty, when the last Pharaoh fled to Ethiopia about 340 B.C.

V. The Egyptian Dynasties have now ended, and we are in firm history: the Macedonian Period after Alexander's conquest, 332 B.C., and the Dynasty of the Ptolemies, 323 B.C. to 30 B.C.; and the Roman Period 30 B.C. to 639 A.D., after which the Arab and Turkish conquests evolved modern Egypt and Muslim Egyptian civilisation.

Having cleared the chronological background, we are now in a position to examine the data about Israel's stay in Egypt in order to see if we can get some idea of the time in Egyptian history when the contact took place. We saw that Dynasties XV to XVII were concerned with the Hyksos (or Shepherd) kings. They were foreigners from Asia, but it is not quite clear exactly what race they belonged to. Josephus supposed that they were Israelites, but that theory is untenable. It has been conjectured that they were Phoenicians, or Amalekites, or Kittites. In any case they were Semites. They founded a city called Zoan (Tanis) on one of the eastern branches of the Deltaic Nile, and were in close communication with the Hittite city of Hebron in the south of Palestine. That would be their own city, but their capital would probably be the same as the old Egyptian capital at Memphis when they were well-established. They are credited with having invented the Semitic alphabet of 22 letters, which (through the Phœnician) is the parent of all modern alphabets. Their invention probably helped in the process of converting old Egyptian Hieroglyphics from picture-writing to phonetic writing. As the Hyksos had close relations with Hebron in Palestine, and Abraham and Israel had settled in the Palestine country, a nexus would be established, by which the first Israelites would be attracted to Zoan in Egypt. It must also be remembered that southern Palestine was a poor country and subject to frequent famines, while Deltaic Egypt was well-watered by the Nile, and suffered from famines only on the rare occasions when the Nile failed to inundate. The attraction of Egypt for the famine-stricken lands of the neighbourhood would therefore be strong. And this is proved in the story of Joseph and his brethren.

Can we form even a rough idea of the dates of the Hyksos occupation? At the latest the Hyksos period ended about 1600 B.C. Renan is therefore probably not

far wrong when he places the Hyksos occupation about 2000 B.C. Possibly a date between 2000 B.C. and 1600 B.C. may be nearer the mark. If we suppose Joseph to have been the Wazir of one of the Hyksos Pharaohs in the Delta, there is no great violence of probabilities in the suggestion, as Joseph and the Hyksos would be of kindred races. In that case Joseph's date would fall somewhere between the 19th and the 17th century B.C.

No reference to Joseph or Moses has been found in Egyptian records. The solitary reference to Israel (*Ysraer*, $r=1$) in a stele of Mer-en-Ptah or Mineptah (about 1225 B.C.) seems to refer to Israel in Palestine rather than to Israel in Egypt. At this we need not wonder, as the Pharaoh who honoured Joseph was strictly speaking only a foreigner. When the reaction against the Hyksos took place and the Hyksos were overthrown, the Egyptians would not probably be anxious to remember the interrupted period or to preserve its memory. The Pharaoh who "knew not Joseph" looked upon the Israelites as contemptible slaves, not worthy of a thought except when they revolted, and then only as a despised race fit to be punished and kept in its place. It may be noticed, however, that the land of Goshen in which Israel dwelt and multiplied between the time of Joseph and the time of the Exodus, was a frontier tract of Egypt in the neighbourhood of the Hyksos city of Zoan in the Delta.

In seeking the approximate date of Moses, we must again look to the probabilities of Egyptian history. It was formerly the received opinion that Rameses II (say about 1250 B.C.) was the Pharaoh who oppressed Israel in Egypt, and that the exodus may have taken place under his immediate successor Mineptah (say about 1225 B.C.). The vigorous policy of Rameses II and the spirit of his time would be consistent with this view. But this date is almost certainly too late. There are indications pointing to the Israelites having already been settled in Canaan by this time. The Hyksos were turned out by the XVIIIth Dynasty, which established the New Empire in the 16th century B.C. Thothmes I (Tethmosis I, about 1540 B.C.) is more likely; in the first flush of his nationalist campaign, to have oppressed the Israelites and led to the exodus. His date fits in better. And his character also accords with the description in sacred history. He centralised the monarchy and made it a military autocracy. Militarism went with the lust of war and foreign conquest. He carried his arms as far as the Euphrates. Slaves, plunder, and foreign tribute made Egypt opulent and arrogant, and he added many monuments to Thebes. We can imagine him in his splendid Court, scarcely paying any attention to Moses, and viewing all his complaints with amusement mingled with contempt and impatience. But retribution was to come in God's good time. The men who followed God's message—Israel in the time of Solomon (a little after 1000 B.C.), and more completely, the Muslims in the time of Ḥaḍhrat 'Umar and his successors—became lords of the East and the West (Q. vii. 137), and ancient Egypt's glories were eventually buried in the sands.

It was this same Pharaoh, Thothmes I, who took for his partner on the Throne his daughter Hatshepsut. If Thothmes was the Pharaoh in Moses's story, we may suppose that it was this same celebrated strong-minded lady, Pharaoh's daughter, who found the child Moses (Exod. ii. 10), and brought him to her mother to be adopted

into the family (Q. xxviii. 9). Like her father, she was a great supporter of the national cults. Moses was nurtured in the palace, and learned all the wisdom of the Egyptians, then reputed to be the wisest of the nations. With their own wisdom he foiled them. Thus in God's Plan the enemies of God and the enemies of Israel (Q. xx. 39) were the very ones who were used as instruments for the purposes of God and the salvation of Israel.

References : E.B., *Egypt* ; D. A. Mackenzie, *Egyptian Myth and Legend* ; Renan, *History of the People of Israel*, 3 vols. ; Joseph Cattani Pasha, *Coup d'oeil sur la chronologie de la nation Egyptienne* Paris 1931 ; Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie, *History of Egypt*, 3 vols. ; *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. I, Chapter IV (iii).

APPENDIX V.

Egyptian Religion and its Steps Towards Islam (see vii. 123, n. 1082).

This should be read along with Appendix IV in which a discussion on Egyptian chronology will be found.

God's Plan works silently but surely among all nations and at all times. In the most fantastic forms of religion appear gleams of His Light of Unity, calls to Islam, i.e., man's submission of his will to the Universal Will (see C. 7-10). From that point of view the religious history of Egypt from the most ancient times to the present day is most interesting, as is indeed the religious history of any country for which we have records of thought and development. That of India touches us deeply, but it is not directly relevant in a translation and exposition of the Qur'ān. The religious history of Israel is just an earlier chapter of the history of Islam, and our doctors and commentators have written in great detail about it. Sometimes, I think, they have attached exaggerated importance to it. But none of them has paid much attention to Egypt from this point of view. Our people know very little of ancient Egypt and have shown little interest in it. It is a healthy sign that modern Egypt is showing much interest in it, and I hope that it will in time recognise in it a valuable safeguardment of religious ideas leading up to Islam.

The field of Egyptology is vast and is being extended every day by the diligent researches of archæologists and scholars. I do not propose to write an essay on Egyptian religion. But I wish to put forward a few considerations to show how God's Plan and Will worked steadily, in Egypt as elsewhere, towards a greater and greater appreciation, on the part of the people, of God's true nature and the real purpose of religion. The eternal light of Unity and Islam shines in many ways, and its rays give light to the spiritual aspirations of mankind in the darkest periods. With a gifted and artistic people like the Egyptians, their religious sense was led, in spite of many rebuffs, gradually to a purer and purer conception of man's eternal destiny, until Muḥammad's Message was preached to them in the very language in which it was originally preached in Arabia. And that language, Arabic, became and is now the language of the Egyptian people themselves.

In the pre-Dynastic Egypt there must already have been a great deal of development in the religious conceptions which afterwards showed such vitality in Dynastic Egypt. The Old Kingdom, including the Pyramid Period, shows that the Egyptian mind was obsessed with the certainty of life after death. It was also impressed with ideas of grandeur, order, and precision in the universe,—ideas which found eloquent expression in the grand conceptions and mathematical symmetry and simplicity of its architecture. Its massive dignity and repose are also reflected in the faces and poses of the figures in Egyptian statuary and painting. The unending expanse and the mystery of the desert seem to have acted on the Egyptian mind like a soporific and made it less active in mundane affairs and less practical in speculation than that of some other races of similar gifts. What mysteries are typified in the proportions of the

Pyramids and their internal galleries and mysterious chambers, we shall probably never know with certainty. But a haunting sense of death and of the other world seems to oppress us in its atmosphere as it does in the grim scenes of the "Book of the Dead." As Prof. T. E. Peet remarks (*Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. I, p. 354), "the Egyptian mind closely associated together men, gods, and the dead as merely three species of a single genus." Each of these it considered was subject to an irresistible force called *Hika* or *Heka*; hence the force of Magic, Incantations to the Dead, and Rites and Formularies in daily life.

The Middle Kingdom brings us face to face with fresh ideas. We have no data with which to appraise the influence of foreign cults and foreign ideas during the period. But knowing, as we do, how Egypt acted as a magnet to the world at large and how many points of contact the Euphrates valley civilisations and the Nile valley civilisations had with each other, we may well suppose a broadening of Egyptian culture and civilisation in consequence. The Hyksos may have been Egyptianised in Egypt, but they could not have failed in their turn to contribute Syrian and Semitic ideas to Egypt. Among these were Monotheism, a patriarchal organisation of society, and an impatience of priestly or caste domination. These must have contrasted strangely with the chaotic Pantheon of countless deities, the lash-driven slaves living huddled in the cities, and the dedicated priests and richly endowed temples which catered for the privileged few, but lived by the sweat of the brow of the unprivileged many.

The New Empire was the flowering period of Egyptian genius and requires special consideration. The crudities of the old pre-Dynastic chaotic Pantheon had been in process of attrition through the centuries. Local gods tended to be absorbed in general gods. Some sort of rationalisation and spiritualisation had been going on throughout the Dynastic period. A process of systematisation and unification was now consciously undertaken. The primitive worship of animals had gradually been transformed into a system of animal-gods, with human bodies and animal heads. The human bodies represented the anthropomorphic tendencies, while the animal heads became types of qualities. For example, Anubis, with the dog emblem, was the door-keeper, the messenger, the custodian of the dead. Apis, or Hapis, the sacred bull of Memphis, symbolised the renewal of life; he was identified with Osiris; there were great rejoicings when a new Apis (a black bull calf) was found, and great mourning and costly burial when one died. Thoth, the god of wisdom and magic, was symbolised by an ibis, that stately, mute, mysterious bird of passage in the Nile valley.

In addition to the symbolism of animals, there was the worship of the great phenomena of nature, the Nile, the giver of agricultural bounties to Egypt; and the sun, which, as the god Ra, became the supreme god in Egypt. Then there was the myth of Osiris the good, who came to the earth for the benefit of mankind, was killed by the malice of Set, the power of evil, and reigns as the judge of the dead in the lower world. His faithful wife Isis and his falcon-eyed son Horus figure in the mysteries. It is possible that the Osiris myth itself arose from a myth of the Nile or the sun.

There was a gradual perception of Monotheism, a realisation that God is One and above names. But the picturesque forms, festivals, and representations remained, and as the priests of all grades enjoyed special privileges and monopolised and learning, the people remained ignorant. They were exploited and

enslaved. It was in the midst of such conditions that Moses came. He came to rescue his own people from the bondage of Egypt, a task which he performed. But it must not be forgotten that his mission was also addressed to the king of Egypt and to the people of Egypt. Here also he sowed the seed, although he did not reap the fruit. The king, the Pharaoh, was almost looked upon as a god, and looked upon himself as a god. He had to be humbled, and he was humbled. But God's purpose is not merely to humble. It is also to lead from darkness to light. If the particular Pharaoh was too hard-hearted to respond, his descendant in the fifth or sixth generation made a public confession of the One True God, as we shall see presently. What of the people? The wise men of Egypt, who were confronted with Moses, repented of their deceit, and saw the light by the grace of God, according to the Quranic narrative. Though they were threatened and perhaps martyred, their fate must have opened the eyes of the people and prepared them for the remarkable religious revolution which we shall now proceed to describe.

The Pharaoh of the Exodus was probably Thothmes I (about 1540 B.C.). The Pharaoh Amenophis IV (about 1350 B.C.) adopted the worship of the One Supreme God as the State religion. He had been a high priest of the Sun-god at Heliopolis, but had begun to look upon the multiplicity of gods in the Egyptian Pantheon as a blot on Egyptian religion. His original name had been Amen-hotep ("Ammon is satisfied") as being devoted to Ammon the great god of the State religion at Thebes. He changed his name to Akhen-Aton ("Pious to Aton") and worshipped the Supreme God under the name of Aton. He abandoned the city of Thebes as being devoted to Ammon and founded a new city near the site of what is now Tel-el-Amarna, between Thebes and Memphis, and dedicated it to Aton the Supreme God. The clay tablets discovered at Tel-el-Amarna in 1887 throw much light on the relations of Egypt with her tributaries in Syria. The alphabet on the tablets is the Cuneiform of Assyria: the language is Semitic, and closely akin to Hebrew. Unfortunately the religious revolution of Amenophis IV did not last. The city was only inhabited twenty years. His second son-in-law and successor, Tutenkh-Aton, carried out a counter-revolution. He went back from Aton to Ammon, changed his own name to Tutenkh-Amen, and restored the temples at Karnak and the cult of Ammon. The recent finds from his tombs show what exquisite skill the artists and artisans of Egypt had then attained. The pure religion remained established on the throne only for two generations, but we need not suppose that it was rooted out of the minds of the people.

The later Dynasties, XXI to XXXI, saw the decay of Egypt as a Power. The Assyrian and Persian invasions ultimately extinguished the freedom of Egypt. With the coming of Alexander the Great (332 B.C.) and the foundation of the city of Alexandria, a new era dawned on the culture of Egypt. It mingled with Greek and other thought, and became cosmopolitan in nature. Already, in the time of Herodotus, the sensitive Greek mind had been impressed with the mystery and wisdom of Egypt. It now made the soil of Egypt cosmopolitan in religion, culture, and philosophy. The Ptolemaic dynasty held a broadly tolerant attitude, and even imported the rites of Serapis from the Black Sea and assimilated him to Apis the Bull of Memphis. The new cult of Serapis spread widely over the East, and later, when Egypt came under the Roman Empire (30 B.C.) into the very heart of that Empire. The Serapion in Alexandria, with its famous library, became for a few centuries the true intellectual

centre of the world. The very unfavourable picture drawn of Egyptian religion in Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii* must be referred to the somewhat hybrid cult of Isis as practised in foreign lands rather than to Egyptian religion generally. What course real Egyptian religion took in this period we have no means of judging accurately. In the light of earlier and later events we may suppose that the steady honest industrious Egyptian peasantry and people went on pursuing the even tenor of their career with the same mystic longing for a practical religion which was preparing them for purer forms of worship and a juster distribution of the fruits of labour.

Alexandria in the first centuries of the Christian era was resounding with the shouts of every kind of philosophy and the teaching of every kind of religious sect, from East and West, North and South, but mainly from the East, which has ever been a nursery of religious ideas. A special quarter was assigned to the Jews in the city. It became the true centre of Hellenised Judaism, and may claim Josephus among its disciples. Neo-Pythagoreanism, Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, and Manichæism found a home there. Mithraism, which was so widely spread in the Roman Empire, especially in the army, in the first three centuries A.D., was probably represented on its philosophic side in Alexandria. Its intermixture of races, creeds, philosophies, and religions, produced an atmosphere of chaos, which was not cleared until the advent of Islam.

But from a religious point of view our greatest interest in Egypt in the first seven centuries of the Christian era is in the development of Christianity itself. It is difficult to say when exactly Christianity began to displace the older Egyptian cults. But when Christianity was well-established, we find Egypt one of its most important centres. But the new Christianity which was evolved out of the ruins of Christ's simple teaching had four distinct attitudes towards organisation, speculative doctrine, asceticism and mysticism. (1) The native Egyptian or Coptic Church was contemplative, ascetic, and mystical. Monasticism became so rampant that it seriously affected the growth of population and degraded the position of women. (2) The Alexandrian school developed on Greek lines,—political, ambitious, speculative, philosophical, and liable to break up into numerous sects and heresies, each party trying to dominate and put down the others as heretical by the strong arm of the law. (3) The Bishop of Rome, when the seat of the Empire was transferred to Constantinople in 330, gradually developed political power in Italy. He inherited the Roman genius for organisation, and the invasion of the Germanic tribes gave him an opportunity not only of extending the Roman Catholic Church over the whole of Central and Western Europe, but of establishing the Church as superior to the State when the Papacy became an established political power. (4) The Orthodox Eastern Church, and all the sects which it fought in the East, tended ultimately to vanish before the advance of Islam. Had it not been for the vast Slav territories over which it obtained sway, in and around Russia and afterwards in Siberia, the Orthodox Eastern Church would have been reduced to a negligible position like the Coptic Church in Egypt. With pretensions to rule the State, it had yet become, in Kingsley's words in "Hypatia", the "stipendiary slave-official" of the Empire, sharing in all its effete corruption.

But we are anticipating. Before the Roman Catholic Church parted from the Orthodox Eastern Church, the united Church fought with and suppressed many so-called "heresies", some of which represented the views of primitive Christianity,

and the scene of many of these doctrinal fights was in Egypt. The one that interests us most is Arianism. Arius was an Alexandrian Presbyter early in the fourth century A.D. and fought hard for the doctrine of Unity, the simple conception of the Eternal God, as against all the hair-splitting and irrational distinctions in the nature and persons of the Godhead, which finally crystallised in the doctrine of the Trinity, propounded and maintained with much personal acrimony by Athanasius. Athanasius himself was born in Alexandria and became Bishop of Alexandria. He may be counted as the father of Orthodoxy (as now understood in Christianity) and the real systematiser of the doctrine of the Trinity—"three in one and one in three." Up to the third century A.D. the Unitarians had been in the majority in the Christian Church, though subtle metaphysicians had started disputes as to the meaning of "God becoming man," the Logos or the Word, the Power of God, whether the Father and the Son were of the same substance or of similar substance, whether the Son could be said to have been created by the Father, and numerous questions of that kind. They do not interest us now, but they rent the Christian world into many jarring sects until the mission of our Holy Apostle dissipated the mists and re-established the doctrine of Unity on a firm and rational basis.

As I have said, the Christian Churches in the East as well as the Germanic nations which came later into the fold adhered to Unity although not in the pure form which was made clear in the Holy Qurân. The issue was joined between Arius and Athanasius, and the first General Council of the Christian Church, that of Nicæa (in Bithynia) in 325, decided against Arius and unitarianism. The controversy, however, still continued to rage until 381, when the Council of Constantinople, called by the Emperor Theodosius the Great, confirmed the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity and declared it to be the only Orthodox one. Though controversies, protests, and persecutions continued long afterwards, we may take that date as the date of the fall of Christianity. Even in Western Christianity, as late as 496, Clovis the Frankish king was the only Christian sovereign sophisticated enough to follow the subtle doctrine of the Trinity. The others were brought into line by political power later.

The Christian creed became narrower and narrower, less and less rational, more and more inclined to use earthly weapons to suppress the eternal truth of God. In 415 the Jews were expelled from Alexandria. In the same year and in the same city the beautiful, modest, eloquent philosopher and mathematician, Hypatia, was murdered,—an outrage against both rationalism and the intellectual and religious position of woman in human society. The murder was a particularly brutal one. She was dragged from her chariot in the streets, stripped naked, and suffered a lingering death in a Christian Church. Her body was then cut to pieces and burned. The worst feature of the crime was the complicity of the Patriarch of Alexandria, who was not only the chief religious dignitary of the Orthodox Church in Egypt but the *de facto* repository of political power. Meanwhile the native Christian community—the Coptic Church,—which had all along clung to the Monophysite doctrine, a corrupt form of Unitarianism, was out of the pale, and its members were held down as a depressed class by their Orthodox brethren. The latter also, basking in official sunshine, collected power and property into their own hands. As Kingsley remarks in *Hypatia*, the Egyptian Church "ended as a mere chaos of idolatrous sects, persecuting each other for metaphysical propositions, which, true or false, were equally heretical in months because they used them as watchwords for division." The social

produced an amount of discontent, for which the redress came only with the advent of Islam.

It was for this reason that the Copts and the inhabitants of Egypt generally welcomed the forces of Islam under 'Amr as deliverers in 639 A.D. The power was taken over by the victorious army of Islam from Cyrus (called Muqauqas in Arabic through the Coptic), the Patriarch of Alexandria, but it was used by the army of deliverance to enlarge the liberties of the Egyptians, to admit them into the universal brotherhood of Islam, and to improve the resources of the country for the benefit of the people. Except a negligible remnant of conservatives the Egyptians as a nation accepted the religion, the language, and the institutions of the Arabs and embarked on a new course of history, which it is unnecessary to follow further in this note.

It should be remarked, however, that what happened in Egypt happened generally in western Asia. The jarring sectarian irrational religions gave place before the triumphant religion of Unity and Brotherhood, and the Byzantine Empire receded and receded until it was swept out of existence. The feeble efforts made by the Emperor Leo the Isaurian in 726-731 to restrict the use of images were a reflection of the puritanical zeal of Islam. But they did not succeed in the area of his authority, and they completely alienated the Papacy from the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Bishop of Rome had been consolidating his power, and in the person of Gregory I (590-604) had already assumed the control of Italy and was seeking the aid and support of the Barbarian invaders who eventually became the pillars of the Papacy. The final and open rupture between the Orthodox Eastern Church and the Roman Catholic Church took place in 1054. But the earlier dates are remarkable. After the birth of the Holy Apostle of Islam the disruption of the Orthodox Christian Church (which had now become an anachronism) began. When Islam was making its triumphant march in the 8th century after Christ, the original (Greek) Church began to take some steps to put its own house in order. But it had lost its mission, and the new Islamic people took its place. The Western Church has since worked on definitely new lines, and its offshoots among the Protestant Churches have, consciously or unconsciously, been influenced by the broad principles of Islam. What the course of future religion may be and how God will unfold His All-Wise Plan it is not given to us mortals to know. In the Islamic Brotherhood many changes have taken place and are taking place. Egypt, in spite of her many vicissitudes in the Islamic period, is in the intellectual forefront among the Arabic-speaking nations of Islam. We pray that her people may be guided, through their educational, cultural, and religious channels, to work with a new spirit for the progress of Islam and the glory of God.

IV, and in addition: Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Gods of*

Dogma, 7 vols., is an elaborate detailed German account of how Christian Dogma grew up and may be read in an English translation; a handier book is R.W. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity* (1834); C. Kingsley's novel *Hypatia* gives a good picture of social and religious conditions in Christian Egypt in the fifth century. On the identity of al-Muqauqas (Pikachios) with Cyrus, see Dr. A. J. Butler's "Arab Conquest of Egypt," (Oxford 1902), pp. 308-362.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA VIII (*Asraf*).

In the previous Introductions to the Sūras we have shown how each Sūra is a step or gradation in the teaching of the Qurān. The first seven Sūras, comprising a little less than one-third of the Qurān, form a gradation, sketching the early spiritual history of man and leading up to the formation of the new Ummat or Community of the Holy Apostle. Now we begin another gradation, consolidating that Ummat and directing us as to various phases in our new collective life.

In this chapter we have the lessons of the Battle of Badr enforced in their larger aspects: (1) the question of war booty; (2) the true virtues necessary for fighting the good fight; (3) victory against odds; (4) clemency and consideration for one's own and for others in the hour of victory.

As regards booty taken in battle, the first point to note is that that should never be our aim in war. It is only an adventitious circumstance, a sort of windfall. Secondly, no soldier or troop has any inherent right to it. A righteous war is a community affair, and any accessions resulting from it belong to God, or the community or Cause. Thirdly, certain equitable principles of division should be laid down to check human greed and selfishness. A fifth share goes to the Commander, and he can use it at his discretion; for his own expenses, and for the relief of the poor and suffering, and the orphans and widows (viii. 41). The remainder was divided, according to the Prophet's practice, not only among those who were actually in the fight physically, but all who were in the enterprise, young and old, provided they loyally did some duty assigned to them. Fourthly, there should be no disputes, as they interfere with internal discipline and harmony.

These principles are followed in the best modern practice of civilised nations. All acquisitions of war belong absolutely to the Sovereign as representing the Commonwealth. In the distribution of booty not only the actual captors but also the "joint captors" and the "constructive captors" share. See Sir R. Phillimore's *International Law* (1885), vol. 3, pp. 209-10, 221-24.

As regards the military virtues, which are the types of virtues throughout life, we are shown by an analysis of the incidents of Badr how, against the greatest odds, God's help will give the victory if men are fighting not for themselves but for the sacred Cause of God. And directions are given for the treatment of prisoners and for maintaining the solidarity of the Muslim community.

The date of this Sūra is shortly after the battle of Badr, which was fought on Friday the 17th of Rāmadhān in the second year of the Hijra. A short account of the battle is given in n. 352 to iii. 13.

Summary.—All booty is really at the disposal of God's Apostle under directions from God. Men of faith accept and obey these directions with cheerfulness. Victory and the prize of victory come from God, as was proved at Badr (viii. 1-19 and C. 89).

Obedience and intelligent discipline, zeal, faith, and gratitude to God, are the true passports to success and protection from the assaults of evil. Evil will be piled up with evil and destroyed (viii. 20-37 and C. 90).

The battle of Badr was a testing time, and showed how virtue and valour can conquer against odds. Steadfastness and obedience; faith, courage, and fearlessness; due preparation and free expenditure of resources and energy;—these are expected from you by God, and His help is all-sufficient (viii. 38-64 and C. 91).

Even tenfold odds against you do not count if you are fighting for truth and faith against enemies of truth and faith; but remember clemency and consideration in the hour of victory (viii. 65-75, and C. 92).

C. 89.—Fight the good fight, but dispute not
(viii. 1-19.) About the prize: that is for God

To give. Men of faith act and obey.

'Tis nobler to fight for Truth

Than to seek worldly gain.

To the pure in faith God will give

The mind and the resources to conquer.

They but fight, with no thought

Of ever turning back: the victory

Should be ascribed to God, not men.

Sūra VIII.

Anfal, or the Spoils of War.

*In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

1. They ask thee¹¹⁷⁸ concerning
(Things taken as) spoils of war.
Say: "(Such) spoils are
At the disposal of God¹¹⁷⁹
And the Apostle: so fear
God, and keep straight
The relations between yourselves:
Obey God and His Apostle,
If ye do believe."

2. For, Believers are those
Who, when God is mentioned,
Feel a tremor in their hearts,
And when they hear
His Signs rehearsed, find
Their faith strengthened,
And put (all) their trust
In their Lord;

3. Who establish regular prayers
And spend (freely) out of
The gifts We have given
Them for sustenance: ¹¹⁸⁰

4. Such in truth are the Believers:
They have grades of dignity
With their Lord, and forgiveness,
And generous sustenance:

¹¹⁷⁸. The occasion was the question of the division of the booty after the battle of Badr. See Introduction to this Sūra.

¹¹⁷⁹. Booty taken in a lawful and just war does not belong to any individual. If he fought for such accessory rewards, he fought from wrong motives. It belongs to the Cause, in this case the Cause of God, as administered by His Apostle. Any portions given out to individuals are accessory gifts, windfalls from the bounty of the Commander. The chief thing is to remain staunch to the Cause of God, and have no differences among those who stand for the Cause. Our internal relations must be kept straight: they must not be disturbed by cupidity or worldly considerations of gain, for any windfalls of this kind should be outside our calculations.

¹¹⁸⁰. *Sustenance*: again in both the literal and the metaphorical sense. The object is to warn off from the love of booty and worldly wealth. Why do we want these? To all true Believers God gives generous sustenance in any case, in both senses, but especially in the spiritual sense, for it is coupled with forgiveness and grades of dignity before God, in the next verse.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ
قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ
فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصِلُوا ذَاتَ يَدَيْكُمْ
وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

۲- إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ
وَجِلَتْ لَهُمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ إِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا
وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

3. Who establish regular prayers
And spend (freely) out of
The gifts We have given
Them for sustenance: ¹¹⁸⁰

4. Such in truth are the Believers:
They have grades of dignity
With their Lord, and forgiveness,
And generous sustenance:

5. Just as¹¹⁸¹ thy Lord ordered thee
Out of thy house in truth,
Even though a party among
The Believers disliked it,

هـ كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَإِنْ قَرِيبًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكَرَهُونَ ۝

6. Disputing with thee concerning
The truth after it was made
Manifest, as if they were
Being driven to death
And they (actually) saw it.¹¹⁸²

بِمُجَادَلَتِكَ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعْدَ مَا
تَبَيَّنَ كَأَنَّمَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ
وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ۝

7. Behold ! God promised you
One of the two (enemy) parties,¹¹⁸³
That it should be yours :
Ye wished that the one
Unarmed should be yours,
But God willed
To justify the Truth
According to His words,
And to cut off the roots
Of the Unbelievers.

وَرَأَيْتُ يَوْمَئِذٍ كَمَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ أَحَدَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ
أَنَّهُمَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدَّدُونَ أَنْ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ
الشُّوْكَةِ تَكُونُ لَكُمْ
وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَيِّقَ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ
وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكَافِرِينَ ۝

8. Let Him justify Truth
And prove Falsehood false,
Distasteful though it be
To those in guilt.

لِيُخَيِّقَ الْحَقَّ وَيُبْطِلَ الْبَاطِلَ
وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ۝

1181. *Just as*: the comparison takes us back to the first clause in verse 4: "such in truth are the Believers"—just as thy Lord also is just and true in ordering thee out to fight against heavy odds, when the alternative was to fight against the unarmed caravan which would have given thee abundant booty almost without a fight. To appreciate the full meaning, remember that the word *haqq*, translated "truth" means also "right," "just," "what is becoming." The true Believers believe in truth and do right in obedience to God's command. So God also, in asking them to fight against odds, is not asking them to rush to destruction, but is providing them with an opportunity of vindicating the truth in scorn of worldly advantage. And He made good His promise by giving them victory.

1182. In verse 6 we have again the word "truth": some of the Believers disputed concerning "the truth": they did not feel sure that the course recommended was the true and right course. They thought it would be certain destruction: they saw death almost staring them in the face.

1183. Just before Badr there were two alternatives before the Muslims in Medina, to save themselves from being overwhelmed by the Meccan Quraish with all their resources from the rich Syrian trade. One, which had least danger for the time being, and also promised much booty, was to fall upon the Quraish caravan returning from Syria to Mecca richly laden, and led by Abū Sufyan with only 40 men unarmed. From a worldly point of view this was the safest and most lucrative course. The other alternative, which was actually adopted on the recommendation of the Apostle by the guidance of God, was to leave the booty alone and march out boldly against the well-armed and well-equipped Quraish army of 1,000 men coming from Mecca. The Muslims had no more than 300 men, ill-armed, to oppose to this force. But if they could defeat it, it would shake the selfish autocracy which was in possession of Mecca. By God's help they won a splendid victory, and the standard of Truth was established, never to be lowered again.

9. Remember ye implored
The assistance of your Lord,
And He answered you :
" I will assist you
With a thousand of the angels,
Ranks on ranks." ¹¹⁸⁴

٩-إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ
فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُمْ
بِأَلْفٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرَدِّفِينَ ۝

10. God made it but a message
Of hope, and an assurance
To your hearts : (in any case) ¹¹⁸⁵
There is no help
Except from God :
And God is Exalted, Wise.

١٠-وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ وَتَظْمِنُنَّ
بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَمَا تَنْصُرُوا مِنْ عِنْدِ
اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝

SECTION 2.

11. Remember He sent down
A sort of drowsiness ¹¹⁸⁶
To give you calm as from
Himself, and he caused
Rain to descend on you ¹¹⁸⁷
From heaven, to clean you
Therewith, to remove from you
The stain of Satan, ¹¹⁸⁸
To strengthen your hearts,
And to plant your feet
Firmly therewith.

١١-إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ اللَّعَاسَ أَمْنَةً مِنْهُ
وَيُنْزِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ بِهِ
وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ رِجْزَ الشَّيْطَانِ
وَلِيُثَبِّتَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ
وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ ۝

12. Remember thy Lord inspired
The angels (with the message):
" I am with you : give
Firmness to the Believers :

١٢-إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ
أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

1184. Cf. iii. 123, 125, 126. The number of angels, a thousand at Badr and three thousand and five thousand at Uhud, is probably not to be taken literally, but to express a strength at least equal to that of the enemy.

1185. All help comes ultimately from God. In special cases it may take special forms to put heart into us, and to fit in with our feelings and our psychology.

1186. Cf. iii. 154 for Uhud. Calm (presence of mind) is essential in battle and in all posts of danger. If the mind is too much in a state of excitement, it cannot carry out a well-considered or well-concerted plan. This spirit of calm confidence on the part of the Muslims won against the blustering violence of the Quraish.

1187. The rain was welcome for many reasons. (1) Water was scarce both for drinking and ablutions; (2) the Muslim band, without baggage or equipment or comforts, found that their thirst aggravated their fatigue; (3) the sand was loose, and the rain consolidated it and enabled them "to plant their feet firmly."

1188. "Stain of Satan": both literally and figuratively. Dirt is physically a symbol of evil, and the Muslims were particular about ablutions before prayer. But the rain also refreshed their spirits and removed any lurking doubts in their minds (suggestions of the Evil One) that victory might be impossible in such adverse circumstances.

- I will instil terror
Into the hearts of the Unbelievers :
Smite ye above their necks
And smite all their
Finger-tips off them." 1189
13. This because they contended
Against God and His Apostle :
If any contend against God
And His Apostle, God
Is strict in punishment.
14. Thus (will it be said) : " Taste ye
Then of the (punishment) :
For those who resist God,
Is the penalty of the Fire."
15. **Q**h ye who believe !
When ye meet
The Unbelievers
In hostile array, 1190
Never turn your backs
To them.
16. If any do turn his back
To them on such a day—
Unless it be in a stratagem
Of war, or to retreat
To a troop (of his own)—
He draws on himself
The wrath of God,
And his abode is Hell,—
An evil refuge (indeed) !
17. It is not ye who
Slew them ; it was God :
- سَائِلِينَ فِي ثُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرَّعْبَ
فَاضْرِبُوا قُتُوبَ الْأَعْنَاقِ
وَاضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ ۝
۱۳- ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
فَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝
۱۴- ذَلِكُمْ قَدْ وَفُّوا
وَأَن يُلَکْفِرِينَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝
۱۵- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
إِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحَفًا
فَلَا تُولُوهُمْ الْأَدْبَارَ ۝
۱۶- وَمَنْ يُولُوهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دُبُرَهُ
إِلَّا مُتَحِدِّيًا لِلْغَنَائِلِ أَوْ مُتَحِدِّيًا إِلَى فِتْنَةٍ
فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ
وَبَشِّرِ الصَّادِقِينَ
۱۷- فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَکِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ

1189. The vulnerable parts of an armed man are above the neck. A blow on the neck, face, or head, finishes him off. If he has armour it is difficult to get at his heart. But if his hands are put out of action, he is unable to wield his sword or lance or other weapon, and easily becomes a prisoner.

1190. The laws of spiritual fight are exactly similar to those enforced by military virtue and discipline. Meet your enemy fairly and squarely, not rashly, but after due preparation. *Zahfan* in the text (*meeting in hostile array*) implies a slow and well-planned proceeding towards a hostile army. When once in combat, carry it through: there is no room for second thoughts. Death or victory should be the motto of every soldier: it may be death for himself individually, but if he has faith, there is triumph in either case for his cause. Two exceptions are recognised: (1) *reculer pour mieux sauter*, to go back in order to jump forward; or to deceive the enemy by a feint; (2) if an individual or body is, by the chances of battle, isolated from his own force, he can fall back on his force in order to fight the battle. There is no virtue in mere single-handedness. Each individual must use his life and his resources to the best advantage for the common cause.

When thou threwest (a handful ¹¹⁹¹
Of dust), it was not
Thy act, but God's:
In order that He might
Test the Believers
By a gracious trial ¹¹⁹³
From Himself: for God
Is He Who heareth
And knoweth all things.

18. That, and also because
God is He Who makes feeble
The plans and stratagems
Of the Unbelievers.

19. (Oh Unbelievers!) if ye prayed
For victory and judgment, ¹¹⁹³
Now hath the judgment
Come to you: if ye desist
(From wrong), it will be
Best for you: if ye return
(To the attack), so shall We.
Not the least good
Will your forces be to you
Even if they were multiplied:
For verily God
Is with those who believe!

وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ
وَالْيُسْبُلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءٌ حَسَنًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝

١٨- ذَلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
مُوْهِنٌ كَيْدَ الْكَافِرِينَ ۝

١٩- إِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْقُدْرُ
وَأِنْ تَنْتَهُوا فَنُفُوْهُ غَيْرُكُمْ
وَأِنْ تَعُودُوا نَعُدْ
وَلَنْ تُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ غَنَّتُكُمْ شَيْئًا
وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

C. 90. — Be ready to obey God's call, and to hold
(viii. 20-37). A ll else as naught: He will give you

The light, turn away all evil from you,
And forgive you your sins and shortcomings.
Ever keep in remembrance His mercies and grace.
The godless may try to keep men
From God, but they will not thrive:
They will be hurtled together to destruction.

1191. When the battle began, the Holy Apostle prayed, and threw a handful of dust or sand at the enemy, symbolical of their rushing blindly to their fate. This had a great psychological effect. Every act in the battle is ascribed to God, as it was in His cause, and it was not undertaken except by His command.

1192. Numerically the odds against the Muslims were three to one. In other ways they were at a disadvantage: of arms and equipment they had but little, while the enemy were well-found; they were inexperienced, while the Quraish had brought their foremost warriors. In all this there was a test, but the test was accompanied by gracious favours of countless value: their Commander was one in whom they had perfect faith, and for whom they were ready to lay down their lives; the rain refreshed them; their spirit was unshaken; and they were fighting in God's cause. Thus the trial or test became itself a blessing.

1193. *Fath* = victory, decision, judgment. The Quraishin Mecca had prayed for victory; they were confident that their superior numbers, equipment, and experience would be decisive. With a play on the word, they are told that the decision had come, and the victory—but not in the sense they had hoped for!

SECTION 3.

20. **Oh ye who believe !**
Obey God and His Apostle,
And turn not away from him
When ye hear (him speak).
21. Nor be like those who say,
"We hear," but listen not: ¹¹⁹⁴
22. For the worst of beasts
In the sight of God
Are the deaf and the dumb, — ¹¹⁹⁵
Those who understand not.
23. If God had found in them
Any good, He would indeed
Have made them listen:
(As it is), if He had made them
Listen, they would but have
Turned back and declined (faith).
24. Oh ye who believe !
Give your response to God
And His Apostle, when He
Callesh you to that which
Will give you life; ¹¹⁹⁶
And know that God
Cometh in between a man ¹¹⁹⁷
And his heart, and that
It is He to Whom
Ye shall (all) be gathered.

٢٠- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ ○

٢١- وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَ
هُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ○

٢٢- إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الضُّمَمُ
الْبَكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ○

٢٣- وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ
خَيْرًا لَاسْمَعَهُمْ
وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ○

٢٤- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ
إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ
وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ
وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَهُ مَشْهُرُونَ ○

1194. Cf. ii. 93.

1195 Cf. ii. 18.

1196. There are two points to note. (1) Note that after God and His Apostle are mentioned, the pronoun and verb in the next clause are singular: everything that God's Apostle put forward as an injunction came by inspiration from God: the Apostle made his will coincide completely with God's will. (2) We are asked actively to give our response in deed and life to the call of duty and conscience, for that call leads to real life, the life eternal, even though it may apparently mean in this world the loss of things that make life dear or the loss of life itself. If we refer this to Jihād, i.e., fighting in and for the Cause, both literally and metaphorically, the meaning becomes quite clear.

1197. If the human heart is refractory and refuses to obey the call of God, that is not the end of the matter. God has to be reckoned with. The refusal may be because there was some pet human scheme which the heart of man was not willing to give up for God's Cause. Will that scheme come to fruition by refusing to serve the higher Cause? By no means. Man proposes, but God disposes. If the scheme or motive was perfectly secret from men, it was not secret from God. The heart is the innermost seat of man's affections and desires: but between this seat and man himself is the presence of the Omnipresent.

25. And fear tumult or oppression,¹¹⁹⁸
Which affecteth not in particular
(Only) those of you who do wrong :
And know that God
Is strict in punishment.

٢٥- وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً
لَا تُصِيبُنَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ○

26. Call to mind when ye
Were a small band,
Despised through the land,
And afraid that men might
Despoil and kidnap you;¹¹⁹⁹
But He provided a safe asylum
For you, strengthened you
With His aid, and gave you
Good things for sustenance:
That ye might be grateful.

٢٦- وَاذْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ
مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَتَخَفَتَكُمْ النَّاسُ
فَأَوْلَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ بِضُرِّهِ
وَزَرَعَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ○

27. ☞ Ye that believe !
Betray not the trust
Of God and the Apostle,
Nor misappropriate knowingly
Things entrusted to you.¹²⁰⁰

٢٧- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ
وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا أَمْنَكُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ○

28. And know ye
That your possessions

٢٨- وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ

1198. *Fitna* has many meanings : (1) the root meaning is trial or temptation, as in ii. 102 and viii. 28 ; (2) an analogous meaning is trial or punishment, as in v. 74 ; (3) tumult or oppression, as in ii. 193 ; and here ; and in viii. 39 ; (4) there is here (viii. 25) the further shade of meaning suggested : discord, sedition, civil war.

This warning against internal discord or tumult was very necessary in the Civil Wars of early Islam, and was never more necessary than it is now. For it affects innocent and guilty alike.

1199. On the immediate occasion the Muslims were reminded that they were a small band in Mecca ; despised and rejected ; living in a state of insecurity for their persons, their lives, their property, and those of their dependants ; persecuted and exiled ; and how by the grace of God they found a safe asylum in Medina, how they found friends and helpers, how their many needs were cared for and how at length they gathered strength and numbers enough to defeat the forces of godlessness, injustice, and oppression.

But for every individual, in some form or other, the lesson applies. His spiritual life begins humbly ; he is despised and laughed at, perhaps persecuted and shut out from ordinary privileges open to all ; but God gives him strength ; friends spring up for him ; and he is sustained until his highest spiritual desires are gradually fulfilled.

1200. Trusts may be of various kinds : (1) property, goods, credit, etc. ; (2) plans, confidences, secrets, etc. ; (3) knowledge, talents, opportunities, etc. which we are expected to use for our fellow-men. Men may betray the trust of God and His Apostle by misusing property, or abusing the confidence reposed in them, or the knowledge or talents given to them. On that special occasion, when the plans for the protection of God's worshippers against annihilation were of special importance, the Apostle's trust and confidence had to be guarded with special care. Occasions for scrupulously respecting the trust and confidence of our fellow-men occur every day in our life, and few of us can claim perfection in this respect. Hence the special distinction of the man of God, who earned the title of *Al-Amin*, the one who was true to every trust reposed in him.

And your progeny
Are but a trial; ¹²⁰¹
And that it is God
With whom lies
Your highest reward.

SECTION 4.

29. **O**h ye who believe!
If ye fear Him,
He will grant you a Criterion ¹²⁰²
(To judge between right and wrong),
Remove from you (all) evil
(That may afflict) you,
And forgive you:
For God is the Lord
Of grace unbounded.

30. **R**emember how the
Unbelievers
Plotted against thee, to keep
Thee in bonds, or slay thee,
Or get thee out (of thy home). ¹²⁰¹
They plot and plan,
And God too plans,
But the best of planners ^{1203A}
Is God.

31. **W**hen Our Signs are rehearsed
To them, they say: "We
Have heard this (before):
If we wished, we could
Say (words) like these:
These are nothing
But tales of the ancients." ¹²⁰⁴

وَأُولَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ
وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَ أَجْرٍ عَظِيمٍ ٥

۲۹-يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا
وَيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ
وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ٥

۳۰-وَلَاذِينَ يَنْتَكِرُكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ
وَيَنْتَكِرُونَ وَيَنْتَكِرُ اللَّهُ
وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمُنَازِمِينَ ٥

۳۱-وَإِذْ تُنصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِتَيْنَا قُلُوبًا فَذَلِكُمْ
سَمِعْنَا لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا
إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ٥

1201. A big family—many sons—was considered a source of power and strength: iii. 10, 116. So in English, a man with many children is said to have his "quiver full": Cf. Psalms, cxxvii. 4-5: "As arrows are in the hands of a mighty man, so are the children of thy youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate." So with property and possessions: they add to a man's dignity, power, and influence. But both possessions and a large family are a temptation and a trial. They may turn out to be a source of spiritual downfall, if they are mishandled, or if the love of them excludes the love of God.

1202. Cf. ii. 53 and ii. 185. The battle of Badr is called the *Furqan* in Muslim theology, because it was the first trial of strength by battle, in Islam, between the powers of good and evil. Evil was defeated, and those who had real faith were tested and sorted out from those who had not faith enough to follow the banner of Faith. See also viii. 41 and n. 1210.

1203. The plots against Muṣṭafā in Mecca aimed at three things. They were not only foiled, but God's wonderful working turned the tables, and brought good out of evil in each case. (1) They tried to hold the Apostle in subjection in Mecca by putting pressure on his uncles, relatives, and friends. But the more they persecuted, the more the little Muslim community grew in faith and numbers. (2) They tried to injure or slay him. But the wonderful example of his humility, perseverance, and fearlessness furthered the cause of Islam. (3) They tried to get him and his out of their homes. But they found a new home in Medina, from which they eventually reconquered not only Mecca, but Arabia and the world.

1203-A. Cf. iii. 54.

1204. Cf. vi. 25.

32. Remember how they said:
 "Oh God! if this is indeed
 The Truth from Thee,
 Rain down on us a shower
 Of stones from the sky,
 Or send us a grievous Penalty."¹²⁰⁵

۳۲- وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ
 الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حَجَارَةً
 مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ ارْسِلْ عَلَيْنَا بَرْقًا

33. But God was not going
 To send them a Penalty
 Whilst thou wast amongst them;
 Nor was He going to send it
 Whilst they could ask for pardon.

۳۳- وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ
 وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ
 وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

34. But what plea have they
 That God should not punish
 Them, when they keep out
 (Men) from the Sacred Mosque—
 And they are not its guardians?
 No men can be its guardians
 Except the righteous; but most
 Of them do not understand.

۳۴- وَمَا لَهُمْ أَلَّا يُعَذِّبَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُمْ
 يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَا
 كَانُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنْ أَوْلِيَائِهِ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقُونَ
 وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

35. Their prayer at the House
 (Of God) is nothing but
 Whistling and clapping of hands:
 (Its only answer can be),
 "Taste ye the Penalty
 Because ye blasphemed."

۳۵- وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ
 إِلَّا امْتِجَاعٌ وَتَضْدِيقٌ
 فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ

36. ~~And~~ The Unbelievers spend their
 wealth
 To hinder (men) from the path
 Of God, and so will they
 Continue to spend; but
 In the end they will have
 (Only) regrets and sighs;

۳۶- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
 لِيَصُدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
 فَسَيُنفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً

1205. This was actually a challenge thrown out by the Infidels in Mecca, not seriously but as a taunt. The answer is in the two following verses. God punishes in His own good time, not according to the foolish and frivolous taunts of the Unbelievers. While the Holy Apostle was with them, he—the Mercy of the Worlds—conferred a certain amount of immunity to them. There were also other Muslims, just men who asked for forgiveness. And God keeps the door of repentance and forgiveness open to all as long as they make it possible. But let them not be puffed up with pride, or think that they have lasting immunity. What became of Abū Jahl? He and some of his greatest warriors were slain at Badr. The little autocratic clique that prevented Muslims from access to the Sacred Mosque had their Nemesis not long afterwards. They pretended to be its guardians. But were they? Could they be? Only the righteous could be true guardians to God's places of worship, and particularly to the Central House of the Ka'ba. It was to be a place of pure worship, while their idolatrous worship was mere mummerly,—whistling and clapping of hands. All false worship advertises itself by noise and unseemly riot: it is said that the Pagans used to go naked round the Ka'ba.

At length they will be overcome:
And the Unbelievers will be
Gathered together to Hell;—

37. In order that God might separate¹²⁰⁶
The impure from the pure,
Put the impure, one on another,
Heap them together, and cast them
Into Hell. They will be
The ones to have lost.

ثُمَّ يُعْلَبُونَ هُ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ يُخْشَرُونَ ٣٧
لِيُجْعَلَ اللَّهُ الشَّيْءَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ وَيَجْعَلَ
الشَّيْءَ بَعْضُهُ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ لِّيُزَكِّيَ الْجَمِيعًا
لِيُجْعَلَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ٣٨

C. 91.—The battle of Badr brought to an issue
(viii. 38-64.) The fight between Truth and Unbelief.

It was the Day of Differentiation.

Not for spoils was it won, nor by numbers;
But by courage and planning, union of wills,
And pooling of strength and resources,—
Above all by the help of God,
Whose help is ever all-sufficient.

SECTION 5.

38. Say to the Unbelievers,
If (now) they desist (from Unbelief),
Their past would be forgiven them;
But if they persist, the punishment
Of those before them is already
(A matter of warning for them).

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَكْتُمُوا يُعَذَّبْ
لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ ۚ وَإِنْ يُعْذِرُوا فَقَدْ
مَضَتْ سُكُتُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ٣٨

39. And fight them on
Until there is no more
Tumult or oppression,
And there prevail
Justice and faith in God¹²⁰⁷
Altogether and everywhere;
But if they cease, verily God
Doth see all that they do.¹²⁰⁸

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ
وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ
فَإِنْ أَتَمَّوْا
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ٣٩

40. If they refuse, be sure
That God is your Protector—
9 The Best to protect
30 And the Best to help.

وَأَنْ تَوَكَّلُوا فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَاهُمْ
نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ٤٠

1206. It is only when matters are brought to an issue that evil is separated distinctly from the good. Then evil consorts with evil, and good with good. The evil will be piled into a heap. When the cup is full, the punishment will come. There will be no mistake about it. The good should not be discouraged, because in fighting against them, all forces of evil join together and pool their resources; together. The more they do so, the easier is the final arbitrament. It is all in God's Plan.

1207. Cf. ii. 193 and n.

1208. If they cease from fighting and from the persecution of truth, God judges them by their actions and their motives, and would not wish that they should be harassed with further hostility. But if they refuse all terms, the righteous have nothing to fear; God will help and protect them.

41. And know that out of
All the booty that ye
May acquire (in war),
A fifth share is assigned ¹²⁰⁹
To God,—and to the Apostle,
And to near relatives,
Orphans, the needy,
And the wayfarer,—
If ye do believe in God
And in the revelation
We sent down to Our Servant
On the Day of Testing,—¹²¹⁰
The Day of the meeting
Of the two forces.
For God hath power
Over all things. ¹²¹¹

42. Remember ye were
On the hither side
Of the valley, and they
On the farther side,
And the caravan ¹²¹²
On lower ground than ye.
Even if ye had made
A mutual appointment
To meet, ye would certainly
Have swerved from the
appointment: ¹²¹³

۴۱- وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
فَإِنْ لِلَّهِ خُمُسُهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ
وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالسَّكِينِ
وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ
وَمَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ
يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ الْجَمْعِ
وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝

۴۲- إِذْ أَنتُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الدَّنْيَا
وَهُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الْقُصْوَىٰ
وَالرَّكْبُ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ
وَلَوْ تَوَاعَاظُمْ
لَخَفَلْتُمْ فِي الْيَبْعَدِ ۝

1209: The rule is that a fifth share is set apart for the Imām (the Commander) and the rest is divided among the forces. The fifth share reserved is expressed to be for God and the Apostle, and for charitable purposes for those to whom charity is due. Ultimately everything is at the disposal of God and His Apostle: viii. 1: but four-fifths are divided, and only one-fifth is retained for the special purposes. The Imām has discretion as to the mode of division. In the Apostle's lifetime a certain portion was assigned to the Apostle and his near relatives.

1210. *Testing: Furqān*: Criterion between right and wrong, decision between the forces of faith and unbelief. The battle of Badr is called by this name. See viii. 29 and n. 1202.

1211. God's power is shown in the events detailed in the three verses following (vr. 42-44), leading to the complete victory of the Muslims over pagan Qurāish.

1212. The little Islamic force from Medina went out to meet the big Meccan army, and they met on the two sides of a valley at Badr, while the Qurāish caravan was on lower ground towards the sea, about 3 miles from Badr.

1213. They were all at cross purposes. The caravan was making for Mecca, but scarcely thought it could get there. The Qurāish force was trying to save the caravan and then annihilate the Muslims. The Muslims had decided to let the caravan alone but attack the Qurāish army from Mecca, which they thought was going to be small, but which turned out to be big, more than three times their number. Yet the two forces met, precisely at the spot and at the time when a decisive battle should take place and the Muslims dispose of the pretensions of the Meccans. If they had carefully planned a mutual appointment, they could not have carried it out more precisely.

On the Muslim side the few martyrs knew that the victory was theirs and those who survived the battle enjoyed the fruits of the victory. On the pagan side, both those who died and those who lived knew fully the issue joined. Even psychologically both sides went in with full determination to decide the issue.

But (thus ye met),
That God might accomplish
A matter already enacted;
That those who died might
Die after a clear Sign
(Had been given), and those who
lived
Might live after a Clear Sign
(Had been given). And verily
God is He who heareth
And knoweth (all things).

43. Remember in thy dream
God showed them to thee
As few: if He had shown
Them to thee as many,
Ye would surely have been
Discouraged, and ye would
Surely have disputed
In (your) decision: but God
Saved (you): for He knoweth
Well the (secrets) of (all) hearts.

44. And remember when ye met,
He showed them to you
As few in your eyes,
And He made you appear
As contemptible in their eyes: 1214
That God might accomplish
A matter already enacted.
For to God do all questions
Go back (for decision).

SECTION 6.

45. O ye who believe!
When ye meet a force,
Be firm, and call God
In remembrance much (and often);
That ye may prosper:
46. And obey God and His Apostle;
And fall into no disputes,

وَلَكِنْ لِّيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا
كَانَ مَفْعُولًا ۚ

لِيَهْلِكَ مِنْ هَكَذَا عَنْ يَدَيْهِ
وَيُخَيَّرَ مَنْ حَتَّى عَنْ يَدَيْهِ
وَرَأَى اللَّهُ لَسِيمَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ۝

٢٣- إِذْ يُرِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَنَامِكَ قَلِيلًا
وَلَوْ أَن رَأَيْتُمْكُمْ كَثِيرًا لَّفَتَلْتُمُ
وَلَتَنَادَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ
وَلَكِنْ اللَّهُ سَلَّمَ
إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ۝

٢٤- وَإِذْ يُرِيكُمُوهُمْ
إِذِ التَّقِيْتُمْ فِي آخِيَتِكُمْ قَلِيلًا
وَيَقُولُكُمْ فِي آخِيَتِهِمْ
لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا
وَالِىَ اللَّهُ تَرْجُمَةُ الْأُمُورِ ۝

٢٥- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً
فَانْبِئُوا وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ۝

٢٦- وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَادَعُوا

1214. The Muslim army, though they knew their worldly disadvantage, did not realise the full odds against them. The Meccans came exulting in any case, and they despised the contemptible little force opposed to them. Even though they thought the Muslim force was twice as great as it was (iii. 13), still that number was contemptible, when taken with its poor equipment. Both these psychological mistakes subserved the main Plan, which was to bring the matter to a decisive issue, whether the Pagans of Mecca were to continue their arrogant oppression, or the religion of God was to be established in freedom and honour.

Lest ye lose heart
And your power depart;
And be patient and persevering:
For God is with those
Who patiently persevere: 1215

47. And be not like those
Who started from their homes
Insolently and to be seen of men,
And to hinder (men)
From the path of God: 1216
For God compasseth round about
All that they do.

48. Remember Satan made
Their (sinful) acts seem
Alluring to them, and said:
"No one among men
Can overcome you this day,
While I am near to you":
But when the two forces
Came in sight of each other,
He turned on his heels,
And said: "Lo! I am clear
Of you; lo! I see
What ye see not;
Lo! I fear God; for God
Is strict in punishment." 1217

SECTION 7.

49. ~~Lo!~~ the Hypocrites say, and those
In whose hearts is a disease: 1218
"These people,—their religion
Has misled them." But
If any trust in God, behold!
God is Exalted, in might, Wise.

فَتَقَسَّسُوا وَتَكْذَّبُوا بِرُوحِكُمْ
أَصْحَابُ
بِئْسَ اللَّهُ مَعَ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

٢٤- وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا
مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِطَرَفٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ
وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ○

٢٥- وَإِذْ زَيْنُ الْهَمِّ الشَّيْطَانُ أَخْمَأَ الْهَمَّ
وَقَالَ لَا خَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ
فَلَمَّا جَاءَ لَكُمْ فَلَمَّا تَرَأَتِ الْفُتَيْنِ
نَكَّصَ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ
مِمَّا تَكُونُونَ
إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ
وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ○

٢٦- إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُفَوِّقُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ
عَرَّضُوا إِلَيْهِمْ نُهُمُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ
وَلَا يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ○

1215. A fine description of the Muslim virtues which make for success and whose loss brings about humiliation and failure. "Power": literally, "wind,"—the favourable wind for a sailing ship.

1216. A true description of the Meccan army which met its doom.

1217. It is the way with the leaders of evil, when they find their cause lost, that they wash their hands of their followers and leave them in the lurch. They see more clearly than their dupes. They are not simpletons: they know the consequences of the wrath of God. Satan's "fear" of God is terror combined with hatred,—the very opposite of the feeling which is described in *Taqwa*, viz., the desire to avoid doing anything against God's will, such desire being founded on trust in God and the love of God.

1218. Cf. ii, 10, for "disease in the heart."

Trust in God brings its own reward: our eyes are opened, and we see how great, good, and wise is the Cherisher of the Worlds. Others may sneer and despise. But the blessing of God keeps our minds fresh and our hearts contented.

50. If thou couldst see,
When the angels take the souls
Of the Unbelievers (at death),¹²¹⁹
(How) they smite their faces
And their backs, (saying):
"Taste the Penalty of the blazing
Fire—

51. "Because of (the deeds) which¹²²⁰
Your (own) hands sent forth:
For God is never unjust
To His servants:

52. "(Deeds) after the manner
Of the People of Pharaoh
And of those before them:
They rejected the Signs of God,
And God punished them
For their crimes: for God
Is Strong, and Strict in
punishment:

53. "Because God will never
change¹²²¹
The Grace which He hath bestowed
On a people until they change
What is in their (own) souls:
And verily God is He
Who heareth and knoweth all
things."

54. "(Deeds) after the manner
Of the People of Pharaoh
And those before them":¹²²²
They treated as false the Signs
Of their Lord: so We

هـ- وَكَوْنَتِى اِذْ يَتَوَلَّى الْاِثْمٰىنَ كَفَرًا
الْمَلٰىكَةُ يَعْصُوْنَهُنَّ وَجُوْهُهُمْ
وَآدْبَارُهُمْ
وَذُوْهُنَّ عَنِ ابِّ السَّوْمٰتِ ۝

هـ- فَاِنَّكَ بِمَا قُلْتَ صٰدِقٌ
وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ لَيْسَ بِظَلٰمٍ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝

هـ- كَذٰبُ ابِّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ كَفَرُوْا بِآيٰتِ اللّٰهِ
فَاَخَذَ اللّٰهُ مِنْهُمْ اَنۡفُسَهُمْ
لِاِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝

هـ- ذٰلِكَ يٰۤاَنۡا اللّٰهُ لَمۡ يَكۡ مُغَيِّرًا
تَّغَيَّرَ اَنۡعَمَّا عَلٰى قَوْمٍ حَتّٰى يُغَيِّرُوْا
مَا بِاَنۡفُسِهِمْ
وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ۝

هـ- كَذٰبُ ابِّ فِرْعَوْنَ
وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
كَذَّبُوْا بِآيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ

1219. In contrast to the taunt against those who trust in God, "that their religion has misled them," is shown the terrible punishment, after death, of those who laughed at Faith.

1220. The punishment is shown to be due to their own deeds of wrong, because God is never unjust to the least of His servants.

1221. God bestows His grace freely, but He never withdraws it arbitrarily. Before He changes their state and circumstances, an actual state of rebellion and contumacy has arisen in their own souls, which brings about its inevitable punishment.

1222. These words from the address of the angels are quoted again, in order to add the comment that follows. Note that in verse 51, the words were that they rejected the Signs of God and were punished: here the words are that they treated the Signs as false and were destroyed:—a higher degree of guilt deserved a severer punishment.

Destroyed them for their crimes,
And We drowned the People
Of Pharaoh : for they were all
Oppressors and wrong-doers.

55. ~~Let~~ For the worst of beasts
In the sight of God ¹²²³
Are those who reject Him :
They will not believe.

56. They are those with whom
Thou didst make a covenant, ¹²²⁴
But they break their covenant
Every time, and they have not
The fear (of God).

57. If ye gain the mastery
Over them in war,
Disperse, with them, those
Who follow them,
That they may remember.

58. If thou fearest treachery
From any group, throw back
(Their Covenant) to them, (so as
To be) on equal terms :
For God loveth not the treacherous.

SECTION 8.

59. ~~Let~~ Let not the Unbelievers
Think that they can
Get the better (of the godly) :
They will never frustrate (them).

فَاَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَاعْرِضْنَا آلَهُ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَكُلِّ كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ ○

٥٥- إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَهُمْ لَا يَزِيدُونَهُ ○

٥٦- الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتَ مِنْهُمْ
ثُمَّ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَهُمْ
فِي كُلِّ مَوْعَةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يَذْكُرُونَ ○

٥٧- وَإِذَا تَشَفَعْنَا لَهُمْ فِي الْحَرْبِ
فَنَزِدْ بِهِمْ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَاهُمْ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذْكُرُونَ ○

٥٨- وَإِذَا اتَّخَذْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً
فَأَقِمْ إِلَيْهِمْ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَائِبِينَ ○

٥٩- وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَبَقُوا
إِنَّهُمْ لَا يُعْجِزُونَ ○

1223. In viii. 22 we were warned against "the worst of beasts in the sight of God", who do not make use of their faculties of hearing, speaking and understanding, in the service of God, and in fact misuse their faculties to blaspheme God. The same brute creatures are shown here in another light : they are faithless both to God and man.

1224. The immediate occasion was the repeated treachery of the Banū Quraiza after their treaties with the Muslims. But the general lesson remains, as noted in the two following verses. Treachery in war is doubly wrong, for it endangers so many lives. Such treachery should be punished in such a way that it gets no chance again. Not only the actual perpetrators but those who follow their standard should be rendered powerless. And the broken treaty should be denounced so that the innocent party can at least fight on equal terms. From actual physical warfare we can carry the same lesson to spiritual warfare. A truce or understanding is possible with those who respect definite principles, not with those who have no principles and are merely out for oppression and wickedness.

60. Against them make ready
Your strength to the utmost
Of your power, including ¹²²⁵
Steads of war, to strike terror
Into (the hearts of) the enemies
Of God and your enemies,
And others besides, whom
Ye may not know, but whom ¹²²⁶
God doth know. Whatever
Ye shall spend in the Cause
Of God, shall be repaid
Unto you, and ye shall not
Be treated unjustly. ¹²²⁷

61. But if the enemy
Incline towards peace,
Do thou (also) incline
Towards peace, and trust
In God : for He is the One
That heareth and knoweth
(All things). ¹²²⁸

62. Should they intend
To deceive thee,—verily God
Sufficeth thee : He it is
That hath strengthened thee
With His aid and
With (the company of)
The Believers. ¹²²⁹

63. And (moreover) He hath put
Affection between their hearts :

٦٠- وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ
وَمِنْ زُبَاهِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِيبُونَ بِهِ
عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ
وَالْآخَرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ
لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ
وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
يُؤْتِكُمْ إِيَّاهُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تظْلُمُونَ ○

٦١- وَإِنْ جَاءَكُمْ السَّلَامُ
فَأَجْمِعْ لَهُمَا
وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ
إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ○

٦٢- وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا أَنْ يَخْدَعُوكَ
فَإِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللَّهُ
هُوَ الَّذِي آتَاكَ بِصُنْعِهِ
وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ○

٦٣- وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ

1225. The immediate occasion of this injunction was the weakness of cavalry and appointments of war in the early fights of Islam. But the general meaning follows. In every fight, physical, moral, or spiritual, arm yourself with the best weapons and the best arms against your enemy, so as to instil wholesome respect into him for you and the Cause you stand for.

1226. There are always lurking enemies whom you may not know, but whom God knows. It is your duty to be ready against all, for the sacred Cause under whose banner you are fighting.

1227. Be always ready and put all your resources into your Cause. You do not do so in vain, God's reward will come in various forms. He knows all, and His reward will always be more generous than you can possibly deserve.

1228. While we must always be ready for the good fight lest it be forced on us, even in the midst of the fight we must always be ready for peace if there is any inclination towards peace on the other side. There is no merit merely in a fight by itself. It should be a joyful duty not for itself, but to establish the reign of peace and righteousness and God's Law.

1229. In working for peace there may be a certain risk of treachery on the other side. We must take that risk because the man of God has God's aid to count upon and the strength of the united body of the righteous.

Not if thou hadst spent
All that is in the earth,
Couldst thou have produced
That affection, but God
Hath done it : for He
Is Exalted, in might, Wise.¹²³⁰

لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا
مَا أَلْفَتْ بِئِنَّ قُلُوبَهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ
أَلْفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ٥

64. Oh Apostle! Sufficient
Unto thee is God,—
Unto thee and unto those
Who follow thee
Among the Believers.¹²³¹

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ
وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ٦

C. 92.—No man of heart, spirit, or constancy
viii. 65-75.) Can ever be cowed down by odds
Against him. We fight not for spoils
Or for captives, but for the glory
Of God, and for truth and faith.
We must be kind to all, but specially
Regard the needs of our comrades,
Linked to us by ties of duty and affection.
Our highest reward will be forgiveness
And grace from the Giver of all.

SECTION 9.

65. Oh Apostle! rouse the Believers
To the fight. If there are
Twenty amongst you, patient
And persevering, they will
Conquer two hundred: if a hundred,
They will conquer a thousand
Of the Unbelievers: for these
Are a people without
understanding.¹²³²

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى
الْقِتَالِ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عِشْرُونَ
صَابِرُونَ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا ثَلَاثِينَ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ
أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا ثَلَاثِينَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِآلِهِمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ٧

1230. On the immediate occasion, the greatest miracle and most wonderful working of God's grace was the union of hearts produced among the jarring, war-like, excitable elements of Arabia under the gentle, firm, and wise guidance of Muḥammad, the Apostle of God. At all times we must pray to God for this gift above all,—union, understanding, and pure and sincere affection among those who take God's name. With it there is strength and success. Without it there is humiliation, slavery, and moral degradation. There may be many causes of difference and dispute. The reconciliation can only come from the glory and wisdom of God.

1231. *The Believers* : mere lip-profession of belief, or even the kind of belief that does not result in action, is not enough. To those whose belief is so sincere that it results in complete trust in God and in fearless action in His service, the consequences on this earth do not matter. God's good pleasure is enough for them.

1232. In a fight, odds of ten to one against any one are appalling. But they do not daunt the men of faith. Whether they personally win or die, their Cause conquers. They are sure to win: because (1) they have divine aid, and (2) even humanly speaking, those who take up arms against truth and righteousness are fools, and their seeming power is but a broken reed,

66. For the present, God
Hath lightened your (task),
For He knoweth that there is
A weak spot in you: ¹²³³
But (even so), if there are
A hundred of you, patient
And persevering, they will
Conquer two hundred, and if
A thousand, they will conquer
Two thousand, with the leave
Of God: for God is with those
Who patiently persevere.

٦٦- اَلَنْ خَفَّفَ اللّٰهُ حَزْمَكُمْ
وَعَلِمَ اَنْ فِيْكُمْ ضَعْفًا
اِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِّائَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ
يَغْلِبُوا اَلْاَتَمِنِينَ وَاِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ اَلْفٌ
يَغْلِبُوا اَلْاَلْفَيْنِ بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ
وَاللّٰهُ مَعَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ○

67. It is not fitting
For an Apostle
That he should have
Prisoners of war until
He hath slain great numbers ¹²³⁴
In the land. Ye look
For the temporal goods
Of this world; but God
Looketh to the Hereafter:
And God is Exalted, in might, Wise.

٦٧- مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ اَنْ يَكُوْنَ لَهُ اَسْرٰى
حَتّٰى يُغْنِيَنَّ فِي الْاَرْضِ
تُرَيْدُ ذَنْ عَرَضِ الدُّنْيَا
وَاللّٰهُ يُرِيدُ الْاٰخِرَةَ
وَاللّٰهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ○

68. Had it not been for
A previous ordainment ¹²³⁵

٦٨- لَوْلَا رَحْمَةُ

1233. Given equal conditions, Muslims on account of their faith could win against odds of ten to one. But where their organisation and equipment are weak, as was the case about the time of Badr, they were set a lighter task, and asked to tackle no more than odds of two to one against them. As a matter of fact at Badr they won through against odds of more than three to one.

1234. An ordinary war may be for territory or trade, revenge or military glory.—all "temporal goods of this world." Such a war is condemned. But a Jihād is fought under strict conditions under a righteous Imām, purely for the defence of faith and God's Law. All baser motives, therefore are strictly excluded. The greed of gain in the shape of ransom from captives has no place in such warfare.

At the same time, if there has been heavy loss of life already, captives may be taken, and it would be for the Imām to exercise his discretion when it was safe to release them, and whether the release should be free or on parole or on a fine by way of punishment. Destruction and slaughter, however repugnant to a gentle soul like that of Muḥammad, were inevitable where evil tried to suppress the good. Even Jesus, whose mission was more limited, had to say: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword" (Matt. x. 34).

Seventy captives were taken at Badr, and it was decided to take ransom for them. While the general principle of fighting for the purpose of taking captives in order to get their ransom is condemned, the particular action in this case was approved in vv. 68-71.

1235. Though any motive of worldly gain, which may have been in the minds of some among the victorious Muslim army, is condemned as worthy of a severe penalty, what actually happened is ascribed to the Plan of God, which was pre-ordained. Among the prisoners taken were the Prophet's uncle 'Abbās and Ḥaḍhrat 'Alī's brother 'Aqīl, who afterwards became Muslims. 'Abbās was the founder of the celebrated 'Abbāsī Dynasty which played such a notable part in Islamic history. In his case the promise made in v. 70 was amply fulfilled. In the case of all prisoners, if there was any good in their hearts, their very fight against Islam and their capture led to their being blessed with Islam. Thus does God's Plan work in a marvellous way, and evolve good out of seeming evil.

From God, a severe penalty
Would have reached you
For the (ransom) that ye took.

69. But (now) enjoy¹²³⁶ what ye took
In war, lawful and good:
But fear God: for God
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

SECTION 10.

70. **O**h Apostle! say to those
Who are captives in your hands:
"If God findeth any good¹²³⁷
In your hearts, He will
Give you something better
Than what has been taken
From you, and He will
Forgive you: for God
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

71. But if they have
Treacherous designs against thee,
(Oh Apostle!), they have already
Been in treason against God,¹²³⁸
And so hath He given
(Thee) power over them.
And God is He who hath
(Full) knowledge and wisdom.

72. **W**hose who believed,
And adopted exile,

مِنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقَ لَمَسَّكُمْ
فِيمَا أَتَيْتُمْ عَدَاةَ عَظِيمٍ ۝

۷۰- تَتَكَلَّوْا مِنَّا غَنِمْتُمْ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

۷۱- يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِمَن فِي أَيْدِيكُمْ مِنَ
الْأَسْرَىٰ

إِنْ يَعْلمِ اللَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ خَيْرًا
مِّمَّا أُتِيَ بِكُمْ فَهُوَ أَجْدَىٰ مِنْكُمْ
وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

۷۲- وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا خِيَانَتَكَ
فَقَدْ خَانُوا اللَّهَ مِن قَبْلُ
فَأَمْكَنَ مِنْهُمْ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝

۷۳- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا

1236. *Enjoy*: literally, *eat*. See vii. 19, n. 1004, and v. 69, n. 776.

1237. This is a consolation to the prisoners of war. In spite of their previous hostility, God will forgive them in His mercy if there was any good in their hearts, and confer upon them a far higher gift than anything they have ever lost. This gift in its highest sense would be the blessing of Islam, but even in a material sense, there was great good fortune awaiting them, *e.g.*, in the case of 'Abbās (see n. 1235).

Note how comprehensive is God's care. He encourages and strengthens the Muslims, at the same time condemning any baser motives that may have entered their minds. He consoles the prisoners of war and promises them better things if there is any good in them at all. And He offers comfort to those who have left their homes in His Cause, and knits them into closer fellowship with those who have helped them and sympathised with them.

1238. If the kindness shown to them is abused by the prisoners of war when they are released, it is not a matter for discouragement to those who showed the kindness. Such persons have in their treachery shown already their treason to God, in that they took up arms against God's Apostle, and sought to blot out the pure worship of God. The punishment of defeat, which opened the eyes of some of their comrades, evidently did not open their eyes. But God knows all, and in His wisdom will order all things for the best. The Believers have done their duty in showing such clemency as they could in the circumstances of war. For them "God sufficeth" (viii, 62).

And fought for the Faith,
 With their property
 And their persons,
 In the cause of God,
 As well as those
 Who gave (them) asylum¹²³⁹
 And aid,—these are (all)
 Friends and protectors,
 One of another.
 As to those who believed
 But came not into exile,
 Ye owe no duty
 Of protection to them
 Until they come into exile;¹²⁴⁰
 But if they seek
 Your aid in religion
 It is your duty
 To help them,
 Except against a people
 With whom ye have
 A treaty of mutual alliance.¹²⁴¹
 And (remember) God
 Seeth all that ye do.

73. The Unbelievers are
 Protectors, one of another:
 Unless ye do this,
 (Protect each other),
 There would be
 Tumult and oppression
 On earth, and great mischief.¹²⁴²

وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ
 وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
 وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَكَتَبُوا
 أُولَئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ
 وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يُلَاحِظُوا
 مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ وَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
 حَتَّى يُلَاحِظُوا
 وَإِنْ اسْتَنْصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ
 فَعَلَيْكُمْ النَّصْرُ
 إِلَّا عَلَى قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ
 وَبَيْنَهُم مِيثَاقٌ
 وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

۷۳- وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ
 بَعْضٍ إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوا
 تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ

1239. The reference is to the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār*, the Emigrants and the Helpers, the people who forsook their homes and adopted voluntary exile from Mecca in company with their beloved Leader, and their good friends in Medina, who gave them asylum and every kind of assistance, moral and material. Under the magnetic personality of the Holy Apostle these two groups became like blood-brothers, and they were so treated in matters of inheritance during the period when they were cut off from their kith and kin.

1240. The Believers (Muslims) were entitled to all assistance in matters of religion. But if they were not strong enough to suffer voluntary exile on behalf of the Cause and make the personal sacrifices which their more ardent brethren in faith made, they could not reasonably ask for political or military assistance or protection.

1241. If a community suffers voluntary exile on account of persecution and oppression, and some of its weaker brethren stay behind, holding fast to faith but not prepared for the higher sacrifice, the exiles have still a duty to help their weaker brethren in matters of religion. The exiles being at open war against the State which oppressed them, would be free to fight against such State. But if the weaker brethren are in a State in mutual alliance with the Community, the Community cannot in honour interfere with that State, whether it is Muslim or not. Presumably the alliance implies that the grievances of the weaker brethren will be redressed by the State itself. But it is not honourable to embarrass your own ally.

1242. Evil consorts with evil. The good have all the more reason for drawing together and not only living in mutual harmony, but being ready at all times to protect each other. Otherwise the world will be given over to aggressions by unscrupulous people, and the good will fail in their duty to establish God's Peace and to strengthen all the forces of truth and righteousness.

74. Those who believe,
And adopt exile,
And fight for the Faith,
In the cause of God,
As well as those
Who give (them) asylum
And aid,—these are (all)
In very truth the Believers:
For them is the forgiveness
Of sins and a provision
Most generous.¹²⁴³

۷۴ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا
وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَنَصَرُوا
أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا
لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ
وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ۝

75. And those who
Accept Faith subsequently,¹²⁴⁴
And adopt exile,
And fight for the Faith
In your company,—
They are of you.
But kindred by blood
Have prior rights
Against each other
In the Book of God.¹²⁴⁵
Verily God is well acquainted
With all things.

۷۵ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ وَهَجَرُوا
وَجَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ
فَأُولَئِكَ مِنْكُمْ وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ
بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ
فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۝



1243. Believers who make all sacrifices in the cause of God have given the best possible proof of their Faith by their actions. They have loved God much, and much will be forgiven them. What they sacrificed was, perhaps, judged by universal standards, of small value, but its value will be estimated by the precious love behind it, and its reward will be of no ordinary kind. It will not be a reward in the ordinary sense at all, for a reward is given once for all. It will be a provision which lasts for ever, and is on the most generous scale.

1244. Those who come into the fold last are none the less brethren in the fullest acceptance of the term. But any special provisions made in the special circumstances of the first martyrs for the Cause will not of course apply to them as the special circumstances which made them necessary have ceased to exist. See next note.

1245. *The Book of God, i. e., the Universal Plan, the Eternal Decree, the Preserved-Tablet (lxxxv. 22).* Blood-relationship and its rights and duties do not depend on special circumstances of a temporary nature. Any temporary rights of mutual inheritance established between the early Emigrants and Helpers (a. 1239) would not apply to later recruits, who would come under entirely different circumstances.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA IX.

Tauba (Repentance) or *Bar'at* (Immunity).

Logically this Sūra follows up the argument of the last Sūra (VIII), and indeed may be considered a part of it, although chronologically the two are separated by an interval of seven years.

We saw that Sūra VIII dealt with the large questions arising at the outset of the life of a new Ummat or organised nation : questions of defence under attack, distribution of war acquisitions after victory, the virtues needed for concerted action, and clemency and consideration for one's own and for enemies in the hour of victory. We pass on in this Sūra to deal with the question : what is to be done if the enemy breaks faith and is guilty of treachery? No nation can go on with a treaty if the other party violates it at will ; but it is laid down that a period of four months should be allowed by way of notice after denunciation of the treaty ; that due protection should be accorded in the intervening period ; that there should always be open the door to repentance and reunion with the people of God ; and that if all these fail, and war must be undertaken, it must be pushed with the utmost vigour.

These are the general principles deducible from the Sūra. The immediate occasion for their promulgation may be considered in connection with the chronological place of the Sūra.

Chronologically, verses 1—29 were a notable declaration of State policy promulgated about the month of Shawwāl, A.H. 9, and read out by Ḥaḍhrat 'Alī at the Pilgrimage two months later in order to give the policy the widest publicity possible. The remainder of the Sūra, verses 30—129, was revealed a little earlier, say about the month of Ramaḍhān, A.H. 9, and sums up the lessons of the Apostle's Tabūk expedition in the late summer of A.H. 9 (say October 630).

Tabūk is a place near the frontier of Arabia, quite close to what was then Byzantine territory in the Province of Syria (which includes Palestine). It is on the Hījāz Railway, about 350 miles north-west of Medina, and 150 miles south of Ma'ūn. It had a fort and a spring of water. In consequence of strong and persistent rumours that the Byzantines (Romans) were preparing to invade Arabia and that the Byzantine Emperor himself had arrived near the frontier for the purpose, the Apostle collected as large a force as he could, and marched to Tabūk. The Byzantine invasion did not come off. But the Apostle took the opportunity of consolidating the Muslim position in that direction and making treaties of alliance with certain Christian and Jewish tribes near the Gulf of 'Aqaba. On his return to Medina he considered the situation. During his absence the Hypocrites had played, as always, a double game, and the policy hitherto followed, of free access to the sacred centre of Islam, to Muslims and Pagans alike, was now altered, as it had been abused by the enemies of Islam.

This is the only Sūra to which the usual formula of *Bismillāh* is not prefixed. It was among the last of the Sūras revealed, and though the Apostle had directed that it should follow Sūra VIII, it was not clear whether it was to form a separate Sūra or only a part of Sūra VIII. It is now treated as a separate Sūra, but the *Bismillāh* is not prefixed to it, as there is no warrant for supposing that the Apostle used the *Bismillāh* before it in his recitation of the Qurān. The Sūra is known under many

names: the two most commonly used are (1) *Taubā* (Repentance), with reference to ix. 104 and (2) *Barāat* (Immunity), the opening word of the Sūra.

Summary.—Treaties with those Pagans who have treacherously broken their terms are denounced, but four months' time is given for adjustments or repentance. Pagans to be excluded from the sacred Mosques. Infidelity to be fought (ix. 1—29 and C. 93).

The People of the Book have obscured the light of God, but the Truth of God must prevail over all. We must be ready to fight for the Faith that is in us; otherwise we shall be unworthy to uphold God's banner, and He will raise other people in our place (ix. 30—42 and C. 94).

The Hypocrites and their double dealing: their evil ways pointed out. Their punishment will be as sure as the blessings of the righteous (ix. 43—72, and C. 95).

All evil should be resisted, unless there is repentance: falsehood is not content with breach of faith but mocks all good: it should not be envied but shunned (ix. 73—99 and C. 96).

The good pleasure of God is with those who are sincere and make sacrifices in His cause; He will forgive those who do wrong and repent, but not those who intend mischief and foment unbelief and disunion among believers. The believers by their self-surrender obtain eternal Felicity. God will turn in mercy even to those who, though they waver or fail in duty, turn at last to Him (ix. 100-118, and C. 97).

Those who believe should associate with the righteous and the truthful, actively doing their duty. But if the Community marches out, a part of them should remain behind for the purpose of diligently studying religion and teaching their brethren when they return. Every Sūra increases the faith of those who believe, though those diseased in heart may add doubt to doubt. Trust in God, Lord of the Throne of Glory (ix. 119—129, and C. 98).

C. 93.—If the Pagans repeatedly break
(ix. 1—29.) Their treaties, denounce the treaties,
But give them time either to repent
Or to prepare for the just punishment
Of their treachery. Punish the chiefs
Of the treacherous, and destroy them.
But if one of them seek asylum,
Give it: let him hear the Word
Of God and escort him to security.
Be true to the true, but fight those
Who are false to plighted word
And taunt you for your Faith.
No one has the right to approach
The mosques of God unless
He believes in God and follows
God's Law, the law of righteousness.

Sūra IX.

Tauba (repentance) or *Barāat*
(Immunity).

1. ~~إِن~~ (declaration) of immunity¹²⁴⁶
From God and His Apostle,
To those of the Pagans
With whom ye have contracted
Mutual alliances:—
2. Go ye, then, for four months,¹²⁴⁷
Backwards and forwards,
(As ye will), throughout the land,
But know ye that ye cannot
Frustrate God (by your falsehood)
But that God will cover
With shame those who reject Him.
3. And an Announcement from God
And His Apostle, to the people
(Assembled) on the day
Of the Great Pilgrimage,¹²⁴⁸
That God and His Apostle
Dissolve (treaty) obligations
With the Pagans.
If, then, ye repent,
It were best for you ;
But if ye turn away,



١- بَرَاءَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ
مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۝

٢- فَسَيُحْذَرُ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ
وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُمْ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يُخْذِرُ اللَّهُ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُغْفِرٌ كَرِيمٌ ۝

٣- وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ
يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ
أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُ
فَإِنْ تَبُوءْتُمْ
فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ

1246. *Barāat*: usually translated "immunity". I do not think that word correctly represents the Arabic word in this context. I retain it as I cannot think of any single English word as an equivalent. The general sense is explained in the introduction to this Sūra. In verse 3 below I use the periphrasis "dissolve treaty obligations," which goes some way to explain the meaning. The Pagans and enemies of Islam frequently made treaties of mutual alliance with the Muslims. The Muslims scrupulously observed their part, but the Pagans violated their part again and again when it suited them. After some years' experience it became imperative to denounce such treaties altogether. This was done in due form, with four months' notice, and a chance was given to those who faithfully observed their pledges, to continue their alliance.

1247. *Four months*. Some Commentators understand by this the four forbidden months in which warfare by ancient Arabian custom was unlawful, viz. Rajab, Zūl-qa'd, Zūl-ḥajj, and Muḥarram: See ii. 194 n. But it is better to take the signification of the four months immediately following the Declaration. Assuming that the Sūra was promulgated early in Shawwāl (see Introduction), the four months would be Shawwāl, Zūl-qa'd, Zūl-ḥajj, and Muḥarram, of which the last three would also be the customary Prohibited Months.

1248. The great day of Ḥajj is either the 9th of Zūl-ḥajj ('Arafah), or the 10th (the Day of Sacrifice).

Know ye that ye cannot
Frustrate God. And proclaim
A grievous penalty to those
Who reject Faith.

4. (But the treaties are) not dissolved ¹²⁴⁹
With those Pagans with whom
Ye have entered into alliance
And who have not subsequently
Failed you in aught,
Nor aided any one against you.
So fulfil your engagements
With them to the end
Of their term: for God
Loveth the righteous.

5. But when the forbidden ^{months} ¹²⁵⁰
Are past, then fight and slay ¹²⁵¹
The Pagans wherever ye find them,
Or seize them, beleaguer them,
And lie in wait for them
In every stratagem (of war);
But if they repent, ¹²⁵²
And establish regular prayers
And practise regular charity,
Then open the way for them:
For God is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُنْجَرِي اللَّهِ
وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

۴- إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُضُوا شَيْئًا
وَلَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا
فَآتُوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ إِلَىٰ مَدَّتِهِمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ○

۵- فَإِذَا اسْلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمَ
فَاتَّقُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ
وَخُذُواهُمْ وَأَحْصُرُواهُمْ
وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ
وَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ○

1249. The sacred duty of fulfilling all obligations of every kind, to Muslims and non-Muslims, in public as well as private life, is a cardinal feature of Muslim ethics. The question what is to be done with those who abuse this principle by failing in their duty but expect the Muslims to do their part is not to be solved (in the case of treaties) by a general denunciation of treaties but by a careful consideration of the cases where there has been fidelity and not treachery. There we are enjoined to give the strictest fidelity, as it is a part of righteousness and our duty to God.

1250. The emphasis is on the first clause: it is only when the four months of grace are past, and the other party show no signs of desisting from their treacherous designs by right conduct, that the state of war supervenes—between Faith and Unfaith.

1251. When war becomes inevitable, it must be prosecuted with vigour. According to the English phrase, you cannot fight with kid gloves. The fighting may take the form of slaughter, or capture, or siege, or ambush and other stratagems. But even then there is room for repentance and amendment on the part of the guilty party, and if that takes place, our duty is forgiveness and the establishment of peace.

1252. The repentance must be sincere, and that is shown by conduct—a religious spirit of true prayer and charity. In that case we are not to bar the gate against the repentant. On the contrary we must do all we can to make their way easy, remembering that God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

6. If one amongst the Pagans ¹²⁵³
 Ask thee for asylum,
 Grant it to him,
 So that he may hear the Word
 Of God; and then escort him
 To where he can be secure. ¹²⁵⁴
 That is because they are
 Men without knowledge.

وَأَنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ
 فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ
 ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ
 ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ٥

SECTION 2.

7. How can there be a league,
 Before God and His Apostle,
 With the Pagans, except those ¹²⁵⁵
 With whom ye made a treaty
 Near the Sacred Mosque?
 As long as these stand true
 To you, stand ye true to them:
 For God doth love the righteous.
8. How (can there be such a league), ¹²⁵⁶
 Seeing that if they get an advantage
 Over you, they respect not
 In you the ties either of kinship ¹²⁵⁷

كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ
 اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ مَّاهَدْتُمْ
 عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ فَمَا اسْتَقَامُوا لَكُمْ
 فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ٦

كَيْفَ وَإِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ
 لَا تَقْضُوا فِيكُمْ إِلَّا

1253. Even among the enemies of Islam, actively fighting against Islam, there may be individuals who may be in a position to require protection. Full asylum is to be given to them, and opportunities provided for hearing the Word of God. If they accept the Word, they become Muslims and brethren, and no further question arises. If they do not see their way to accept Islam, they will require double protection: (1) from the Islamic forces openly fighting against their people, and (2) from their own people, as they detached themselves from them. Both kinds of protection should be ensured for them, and they should be safely escorted to a place where they can be safe. Such persons only err through ignorance, and there may be much good in them.

1254. *Maaman*: place or opportunity of being secure from all harm.

1255. In this section we have the reasons why the treaties with treacherous Pagan foes were denounced. The clause introducing the exception is a parenthetical clause. The word "Pagans" must be connected with verse 8 which follows. In that verse the word *kaiifa* resumes the clause introduced by the word *kaiifa* at the beginning of verse 7. The exceptional Pagan tribes which remained true to their word were the Banū Ḥamza and the Banū Kināna, who swore their treaty near the Sacred Mosque and faithfully observed it. They were to be given the full benefit of their fidelity even though their kindred tribes were treacherous.

1256. The exceptions having been stated parenthetically in verse 7, the indictment of the general mass of Pagan tribes is now set out briefly but fully and convincingly. After that kind of behaviour how can any treaty be possible with them? The counts are: (1) that whenever they got a slight advantage, they disregarded the ties both of kinship and of covenant as against the Muslims because of their Faith, thus proving doubly treacherous; (2) that they spoke fair words, but had venom in their hearts; (3) that their attitude was one of rebellion against their plighted word; (4) that they disregarded the solemn Signs of God for some miserable worldly gain; (5) that they tried to prevent other people from coming to the Way of God. The first clause is repeated again as the last clause, to emphasize their double treachery, and round off the argument.

1257. Among the Arabs the ties of kinship were so strong as to be almost unbreakable. The Pagan Arabs went out of their way to break them in the case of the Muslims, who were kith and kin to them. Besides the bond of kinship there was the further bond of their plighted oath in the Treaty. They broke that oath because the other parties were Muslims!

Or of covenant ? With (fair words
From) their mouths they entice you,
But their hearts are averse
From you ; and most of them
Are rebellious and wicked.

9. The Signs of God have they sold
For a miserable price,
And (many) have they hindered
From His Way: evil indeed
Are the deeds they have done.

10. In a Believer they respect not
The ties either of kinship
Or of covenant ! It is they
Who have transgressed all
bounds.¹²⁵⁸

11. But (even so), if they repent,¹²⁵⁹
Establish regular prayers,
And practise regular charity,—
They are your brethren in Faith:
Thus do We explain the Signs
In detail, for those who understand.

12. But if they violate their oaths
After their covenant,
And taunt you for your
Faith,—¹²⁶⁰
Fight ye the chiefs of Unfaith:
For their oaths are nothing to
them:
That thus they may be restrained.

13. Will ye not fight people
Who violated their oaths,

وَلَا ذِمَّةَ يُرْسُونَكُمْ بِأَقْوَاهِهِمْ
وَتَأْتِي ثُلُوفُهُمْ
وَأَلْرُّهُمْ فَنَسِفُونَ ۝

۹- اِشْتَرَوْا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ
إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝

۱۰- لَا يَرْقُبُونَ فِي مُؤْمِنٍ إِلَّا
وَلَا ذِمَّةَ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُونَ ۝

۱۱- فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَآتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَنُوا بِمَا فِي الدِّينِ
وَنَفَضُوا الْأَيْدِيَ لِقَوْلِ رَبِّهِمْ ۝

۱۲- وَإِنْ تَنَكَّرُوا إِلَيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ
وَطَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ
فَقَاتِلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ الْكُفْرِ
إِنَّهُمْ لَا آيْنَ لَنَا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُونَ ۝

۱۳- أَلَا تُقَاتِلُونَ قَوْمًا نَكَتُوا إِلَيْنَا عَهْدَهُمْ

1258. The catalogue of their sins being set out, it is clear that they were aggressors in the worst possible ways, and war became inevitable.

1259. The chance of repentance and mercy to the worst enemies is again emphasised, in order that people with any understanding may not be misled into thinking that war was an easy or light matter. This emphasis is balanced by the emphasis in the next verse on the causes which made war inevitable for those with any self-respect.

1260. Not only did the enemies break their oaths shamelessly, but they even taunted the Muslims on their Faith and the "simple-minded" way in which they continued to respect their part of the treaty, as if they were afraid to fight !

Plotted to expel the Apostle,¹⁸⁶¹
And took the aggressive
By being the first (to assault) you ?
Do ye fear them ? Nay,
It is God Whom ye should
More justly fear, if ye believe !

وَهُنَا بِإِخْرَاجِ الرَّسُولِ وَهُمْ بَدُّوْكُمْ
أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ أَتَخْشَوْنَهُمْ

فَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

**14. Fight them, and God will
Punish them by your hands,
Cover them with shame,
Help you (to victory) over them,
Heal the breasts of Believers. ¹³⁶²**

۱۴- قَاتِلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ
وَيُخْزِيهِمْ وَيَنْصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ۝

15. And still the indignation of their hearts.¹²⁶⁸

۱۵- وَيَذْهَبْ غَيِّظَ قُلُوبِهِمْ
وَيَتُوبَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝

For God will turn (in mercy) ¹²⁶⁴
To whom He will ; and God
Is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

16. Or think ye that ye
Shall be abandoned,
As though God did not know ¹²⁶⁵
Those among you who strive
With might and main, and take
None for friends and protectors
Except God, His Apostle,
And the (community of) Believers?
But God is well-acquainted
With all that ye do.

۱۷- اَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ اَنْ تُتْرَكُوْا
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَكُمْ اِلٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَكُمْ اَرْسُلٌ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ
وَلَا تُرْسِلُكُمْ اَوْ اَمْرًا ۚ

1261. The argument now takes a new turn. An appeal is made to the Muslims on various grounds: (1) the shameless disregard of treaties by the enemy, (2) the under-hand plots to discredit the Holy Apostle, and turn him out of Medina as he had been turned out of Mecca, (3) the aggressive taken by the Quraish and their confederates in Medina after the treaty of Hudaibiya (A.H. 6, Zul-qa'd, Feb. 628), (4) the manly attitude that fears God rather than men, and (5) the need to prove our sincere faith by test and trial and struggle and sacrifice (ix. 16).

1262. *Heal the breasts of believers, i.e., of wounds that they may have sustained from the assaults, taunts, and cruelty of the enemy.*

1263. When the victory comes and the wounds are healed, a great peace comes to the hearts of those who have suffered, striven, and struggled. The fighting was an abnormal necessity forced by injustice and oppression. When God's Law is established, the fire of indignation is quelled, and the true Peace of Islam is attained.

1264. God's mercy is unlimited. When evil is destroyed, many of those who were enticed by evil will come into the fold of truth and righteousness, and the cessation of war and conflict will bring peace, certainly to those who fought for the right, but also possibly to those whose eyes have been opened to the working of God's Law and who in healing reconciliation become members of the Brotherhood of Peace in Islam.

1265. Some translators have taken a different verbal construction of this passage, but the ultimate effect in meaning is the same: we must all be tested and tried, but God knows our inmost hearts, and He will support those who strive in His way, out of sincere love for Him, His Apostle, and the body of the true men of faith.

SECTION 3.

17. It is not for such
As join gods with God,
To visit or maintain¹²⁶⁶
The mosques of God
While they witness
Against their own souls
To infidelity. The works
Of such bear no fruit :
In Fire shall they dwell.

18. The mosques of God
Shall be visited and maintained
By such as believe in God
And the Last Day, establish
Regular prayers, and practise
Regular charity, and fear
None (at all) except God.¹²⁶⁷
It is they who are expected
To be on true guidance.¹²⁶⁸

19. Do ye make the giving¹²⁶⁹
Of drink to pilgrims,

١٧- مَا كَانَ لِلشُّرَكَاءِ
أَنْ يَعْبُرُوا مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ
شَهِيدِينَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ بِالْكَفْرِ
أُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ
وَفِي النَّارِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ ○

١٨- إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ
مَنْ أَمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ
وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَئِكَ
أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ○

١٩- اجْعَلْنُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَاجِّ

1266. 'A mara as applied to mosques implies the following ideas: (1) to build or repair; (2) to maintain in fitting dignity; (3) to visit for purposes of devotion; and (4) fill with light and life and activity,—what would be called in Urdu *Masjid ābād karnā*. For brevity I have only used the two words "visit and maintain" in the Translation.

Before the preaching of Islam the Pagans built, repaired, and maintained the Mosque, and celebrated Pagan ceremonies in it, including naked dances round the Ka'ba. They made an income out of it. Islam protested, and the Pagans ejected Muslims and their Leader from Mecca, and shut them out from the Ka'ba itself. When the Muslims were strong enough to re-take Mecca (A.H. 8), they purified the Mosque and re-established the worship of the true God. The families who previously held control could not after this be allowed in a state of Paganism to control the Mosque any longer. If they became Muslims, it was a different matter. The further question arose: should they be allowed to visit it and practise their unseemly Pagan rites? Obviously this would be derogatory to the dignity and honour of the Mosque, and was forbidden. This was the particular occasion to which the verse refers. The general deduction is clear. A house of God is a place of sincere devotion, not a theatre for vulgar rites nor a source of worldly income. Only sincere Believers have a right of entry. Who the sincere Believers are, is explained in the next verse.

1267. See the previous note. Sincere Believers are those who have faith in God and the future, and have a spirit of devotion and charity—a true and abiding spirit, not merely isolated acts now and again. Moreover they must not bow to worldly greed or ambition which produces fear of worldly power.

1268. Others may call themselves by what names they like. True guidance is shown by the tests here indicated.

1269. Giving drinks of cold water to thirsty pilgrims, and doing material services to a mosque are meritorious acts, but they are only external. If they do not touch the soul, their value is slight. Far greater, in the sight of God, are Faith, Endeavour, and self-surrender to God. It is these that will obtain honour in the sight of God. God's light and guidance comes to them, and not to those self-sufficient beings who think that a little show of what the world considers piety is enough.

Or the maintenance of
The Sacred Mosque, equal
To (the pious service of) those
Who believe in God
And the Last Day, and strive
With might and main
In the cause of God ?
They are not comparable
In the sight of God :
And God guides not
Those who do wrong.

20. Those who believe, and suffer
Exile and strive with might
And main, in God's cause,¹²⁷⁰
With their goods and their persons,
Have the highest rank
In the sight of God :
They are the people
Who will achieve (salvation).

21. Their Lord doth give them
Glad tidings of a Mercy
From Himself, of His good
pleasure,
And of Gardens for them,
Wherein are delights
That endure :

22. They will dwell therein
For ever. Verily in God's Presence
Is a reward, the greatest (of all).¹²⁷¹

23. O ye who believe ! Take not
For protectors your fathers
And your brothers if they love
Infidelity above Faith :

وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ أَمَنَ

بِاللَّهِ

وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَجَاهِدَ

فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

لَا يَسْتَوُونَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ٢٠

٢٠- الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي

سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ

أَعْظَمَ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ٢١

٢١- يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ

وَرِضْوَانٍ

وَجَنَّاتٍ لَهُمْ

فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ ٢٢

٢٢- خُلِدَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ٢٣

٢٣- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا آبَاءَكُمْ

وَأَخَوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنْ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْكُفْرَ عَلَى

1270. Here is a good description of *Jihād*. It may require fighting in God's cause, as a form of self-sacrifice. But its essence consists in (1) a true and sincere Faith, which so fixes its gaze on God, that all selfish or worldly motives seem paltry and fade away, and (2) an earnest and ceaseless activity, involving the sacrifice (if need be) of life, person, or property, in the service of God. Mere brutal fighting is opposed to the whole spirit of *Jihād*, while the sincere scholar's pen or preacher's voice or wealthy man's contributions may be the most valuable forms of *Jihād*.

1271. Those who strive and suffer in God's cause are promised (1) a mercy specially from Himself, (2) His own good pleasure, (3) gardens of perpetual delight, (4) the supreme reward, God's own Presence or nearness. These are in gradation : (1) is a special mercy, higher than flows out to all creatures ; (2) is a consciousness of God's good pleasure, which raises the soul above itself ; (3) is that state of permanent spiritual assurance, which is typified by gardens of perpetual delight, and (4) is the final bliss, which is the Presence of God Himself, or, in *ḡufi* language *didār-i-Ilāhī*, the sight of God Himself.

If any of you do so,
They do wrong.

24. Say: If it be that your fathers,
Your sons, your brothers,
Your mates, or your kindred;
The wealth that ye have gained;
The commerce in which ye fear
A decline; or the dwellings
In which ye delight—¹²⁷²
Are dearer to you than God,
Or His Apostle, or the striving
In His cause;—then wait
Until God brings about ¹²⁷³
His Decision: and God
Guides not the rebellious.

SECTION 4.

25. Assuredly God did help you
In many battle-fields
And on the day of Hunain: ¹²⁷⁴
Behold! your great numbers
Elated you, but they availed
You naught: the land,
For all that it is wide,
Did constrain you, and ye

الْإِنْسَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ هُمْ وَالْكَافِرِينَ
هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

٢٣- قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَ
إِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ
وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَمْشُونَ
كِسَادَهَا وَمَسْكَنٌ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكُمْ
مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ
فَتُزَكُّوهُ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرٍ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ٢٤

٢٥- لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ
وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ
فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا
وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ

1272. Man's heart clings to (1) his own kith and kin—parents, children, brothers and sisters, husbands or wives, or other relatives, (2) wealth and prosperity, (3) commerce or means of profit and gain, or (4) noble buildings, for dignity or comfort. If these are a hindrance in God's cause, we have to choose which we love most. We must love God even if it involves the sacrifice of all else.

1273. If we love our earthly ties and comforts, profits and pleasures, more than we love God, and therefore fail to respond to God's cause, it is not God's cause which will suffer. God's purpose will be accomplished, with or without us. But our failure to respond to His will must leave us spiritually poorer, bereft of grace and guidance: "for God guides not the rebellious".

This is of universal application. But it was strikingly illustrated in the case of those faithful ones who obeyed the Apostle's call, left the comfort of their homes in Mecca and suffered exile in Medina, gave up their trade and their possessions, strove and fought for God's cause, sometimes against their own kith and kin or their own tribesmen who were enemies of Islam. They won through. Others were not prepared for such sacrifice, but their failure did not stop the accomplishment of God's plan and purpose.

1274. Hunain on the road to Ta'if from Mecca, and about fourteen miles to the east of Mecca. It is a valley in the mountainous country between Mecca and Ta'if. Immediately after the conquest of Mecca, (A.H. 8) the Pagan idolaters, who were surprised and chagrined at the wonderful reception which Islam was receiving, organised a great gathering near Ta'if to concert plans for attacking the Apostle. The Hawazin and the Thaqif tribes took the lead and prepared a great expedition for Mecca, boasting of their strength and military skill. There was on the other hand a wave of confident enthusiasm among the Muslims at Mecca, in which the new Muslims joined. The enemy forces numbered about 4,000, but the Muslim force reached a total of ten or twelve thousand, as every one wished to join. The battle was joined at Hunain, as described in the next note.

Turned back in retreat.¹²⁷⁵

26. But God did pour His calm¹²⁷⁶
On the Apostle and on the
Believers,
And sent down forces which ye
Saw not: He punished
The Unbelievers: thus doth He
Reward those without Faith.
27. Again will God, after this,¹²⁷⁷
Turn (in mercy) to whom
He will: for God
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
28. O ye who believe! Truly
The Pagans are unclean,¹²⁷⁸
So let them not,
After this year of theirs,¹²⁷⁹

لَمْ وَلَيْتُمْ مَذِيرِينَ ۝

۲۶- ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ
وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَمْ
تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ۝

۲۷- ثُمَّ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَلَى
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

۲۸- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْبُشْرَى
بِحَسْبٍ فَلَا يَقْرَبُوا

1275. For the first time the Muslims had at Hunain tremendous odds in their favour. But this itself constituted a danger. Many in their ranks had more enthusiasm than wisdom, more a spirit of elation than of faith and confidence in the righteousness of their cause. The enemy had the advantage of knowing the ground thoroughly. They laid an ambush in which the advance guard of the Muslim forces was caught. The country is hilly, in which the enemy concealed himself. As soon as the Muslim vanguard entered the Hunain valley, the enemy fell upon them with fury and caused havoc with their arrows from their places of concealment. In such ground the numbers of the Muslims were themselves a disadvantage. Many were slain, and many turned back in confusion and retreat. But the Apostle, as ever, was calm in his wisdom and faith. He rallied his forces and inflicted the most crushing defeat on the enemy.

1276. *Sakīn*: calm, peace, security, tranquillity. Cf. ii. 248. The Apostle never approved of over-weening confidence, or reliance merely upon human strength, or human resources or numbers. In the hour of danger and seeming disaster, he was perfectly calm, and with cool courage relied upon the help of God, Whose standard he carried. His calmness inspired all around him, and stopped the rout of those who had turned their backs. It was with God's help that they won, and their victory was complete. They followed it up with an energetic pursuit of the enemies, capturing their camps, their flocks and herds, and their families, whom they had boastfully brought with them in expectation of an easy victory.

1277. Examples of God's mercy and grace in difficult circumstances in one case illustrate His grace and mercy at all times to those who have faith.

1278. *Unclean*: both literally and metaphorically; because Muslims are enjoined to be strict in ablutions and physical cleanliness, as well as in purity of mind and heart, so that their word can be relied upon.

1279. *This year of theirs*: there is a two-fold meaning: (1) now that you have complete control of Mecca, and are charged with the purity of worship there, shut out all impurity from this year; (2) you have seen how the Pagans have behaved this year; their year of power and misuse of that power may be called *their year*; it is over, and now you Muslims are responsible.

Approach the Sacred Mosque.
And if ye fear poverty,¹²⁸⁰
Soon will God enrich you,
If He wills, out of His bounty,
For God is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

29. Fight those who believe not
In God nor the Last Day,
Nor hold that forbidden
Which hath been forbidden
By God and His Apostle,
Nor acknowledge the Religion
Of Truth, (even if they are)
Of the People of the Book,
Until they pay the *Jizya* ¹²⁸¹
With willing submission,¹²⁸²
And feel themselves subdued.

السَّجْدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَابِهِمْ هَذَا وَإِنْ
خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمْ اللَّهُ مِنْ
فَضْلِهِ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ حَكِيمٌ ٥

٢٩- قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا
بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ
اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ
مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ
وَهُمْ صَاحِرُونَ ٥

- C. 94.—The enemies of Faith would fain put out
(ix. 30-42.) God's light, but God's light will shine
More glorious than ever. Wealth
Is for use and on trust for mankind:
Hoard not, nor misuse it. Fight
A straight fight in the cause of Right:
Go forth bravely to strive and struggle,
And prove yourselves worthy of God.

1280. The concourse in Mecca added to the profits of trade and commerce. "But fear not," we are told; "the Pagans are a waning power, bound to disappear, and you should strengthen your own community, that they may more than counter-balance the apparent loss of custom; and God has other means of improving your economic position." This actually happened. The Pagans were extinguished from Arabia, and the concourse of Pilgrims from all parts of the world increased the numbers more than a hundred-fold. Here is commonsense, wisdom, and statesmanship, even if we look at it from a purely human point of view.

1281. *Jizya*: the root meaning is compensation. The derived meaning, which became the technical meaning, was a poll-tax levied from those who did not accept Islam, but were willing to live under the protection of Islam, and were thus tacitly willing to submit to its ideals being enforced in the Muslim State, saving only their personal liberty of conscience as regarded themselves. There was no amount fixed for it, and in any case it was merely symbolical,—an acknowledgment that those whose religion was tolerated would in their turn not interfere with the preaching and progress of Islam. Imām Shāfi' suggests one *dirhām* per year, which would be the Arabian gold *dirhām* of the Muslim States, equivalent in value to about half a sovereign, or about 5 to 67 rupees. See n. 410 to iii. 75. The tax varied in amount, and there were exemptions for the poor, for females and children (according to Abū Ḥanīfa), for slaves, and for monks and hermits. Being a tax on able-bodied males of military age, it was in a sense a commutation for military service. But see the next note.

1282. '*ʿAn Yadin* (literally, from the hand) has been variously interpreted. The hand being the symbol of power and authority, I accept the interpretation "in token of willing submission." The *Jizya* was thus partly symbolic and partly a commutation for military service, but as the amount was insignificant and the exemptions numerous, its symbolic character predominated. See the last note.

SECTION 5.

30. The Jews call 'Uzair a son¹²⁸³
Of God, and the Christians
Call Christ the Son of God.
That is a saying from their mouth;
(In this) they but imitate¹²⁸⁴
What the Unbelievers of old
Used to say. God's curse
Be on them: how they are deluded
Away from the Truth!¹²⁸⁵

۳۰- وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ
وَقَالَتِ النَّصْرَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ
ذَلِكَ كَذِبُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ
يُضَاهَوْنَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ
فَاَلْكَرُمُ اللَّهُ أَتَى يَوْمَ كَلْبُونَ

31. They take their priests¹²⁸⁶
And their anchorites to be
Their lords in derogation of God,¹²⁸⁷
And (they take as their Lord)
Christ the son of Mary;
Yet they were commanded
To worship but One God:
There is no god but He.
Praise and glory to Him:¹²⁸⁸
(Far is He) from having
The partners they associate
(With Him).

۳۱- لَاتُخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ
أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
وَمَا أَمْرُهُ إِلَّا يُعْبَدُ وَالْهَلَاكِ وَاحِدًا
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
سُبْحَنَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

1283. In n. 718 to v. 20 I have quoted passages from the Old Testament, showing how freely the expression "sons of God" was used by the Jews. A sect of them called 'Uzair a son of God, according to *Baithāwī*. In Appendix II (*Sūra v.*) I have shown that the constitution of Judaism dates from 'Uzair (*Ezra*). The Christians still call Christ the Son of God.

1284. Taking men for gods or sons of God was not a new thing. All ancient mythologies have fables of that kind. There was less excuse for such blasphemies after the apostles of God had clearly explained our true relation to God than in the times of primitive ignorance and superstition.

1285. *Cf.* vii. 78.

1286. *Aḥbār*: doctors of law; priests; learned men. *Cf.* v. 47, where they are associated with Rabbis. *Ruhbān*: monks, ascetics, anchorites, men who have renounced the world; where there is a celibate clergy, the term can be applied to them as well as to members of monastic orders. It is also permissible to apply the term to "saints", where they are deified or credited with divine powers, or where people pray to them as they do in the Roman Catholic Church.

1287. Priest worship, and the worship of saints and ascetics is a form of superstition to which men have been prone in all ages. The growth of Jewish superstition is shown in the Talmud, and of Christian superstition in the doctrine of papal infallibility and the worship of saints. The mere idea of a separate order of priesthood to stand between God and man and be the exclusive repository of God's secrets is derogatory to the goodness and all-pervading grace of God. The worship of "lords many and gods many" was not confined only to the Pagans. The deification of the son of Mary is put here in a special clause by itself, as it held (and still holds) in its thrall a large portion of civilised humanity.

1288. *Cf.* vi. 100.

32. ~~How~~ ^{How} can would they extinguish
God's Light with their mouths,¹²⁸⁹
But God will not allow
But that His Light should be
Perfected, even though the
Unbelievers
May detest (it).

33. It is He Who hath sent
His Apostle with Guidance
And the Religion of Truth,
To make it shine¹²⁹⁰
Above every other religion,
Even though the Pagans
May detest (it).

34. Oh ye who believe! There are
Indeed many among the priests
And anchorites, who in falsehood¹²⁹¹
Devour the substance of men
And hinder (them) from the Way
Of God. And there are those
Who bury gold and silver¹²⁹²
And spend it not in the Way
Of God : announce unto them
A most grievous penalty—

۳۲- یُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ
بِأَلْوَاهِهِمْ
وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يُتَمَّ نُورُهُ
وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ۝

۳۳- هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَى
وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ
لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ
وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ ۝

۳۴- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ
الْأَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لِيَآخُذُوا أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ
بِالْبَاطِلِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالنَّوْصَةَ وَلَا يُنفِقُونَهَا
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبِئْسَ لَهُمْ بَعْدَ ابْتِغَاءِ الْبُخْرِ

1289. *With their mouths*: there is a twofold meaning: (1) the old-fashioned open oil lamps were extinguished by blowing with the mouth; the Unbelievers would like to blow out God's Light as it is a cause of offence to them; (2) false teachers and preachers distort the Message of God by the false words of their mouth. Their wish is to put out the light of Truth, for they are people of darkness; but God will perfect His Light, i.e., make it shine all the brighter in the eyes of men. His Light in itself is ever perfect, but it will penetrate the hearts of men more and more, and so become more and more perfect for them.

1290. Every religion which commends itself widely to human beings and lasts through some space of time has a glimpse of Truth in it. But Islam is the perfect light of Truth. As the greater Light, through its own strength, outshines all lesser lights, so will Islam outshine all else, in spite of the displeasure of those to whom Light is an offence.

1291. *Bil-batili*—in falsehood, i.e., by false pretences, or in false or vain things. This was strikingly exemplified in the history of Mediaeval Europe, though the disease is apt to attack all peoples and organisations at all times. Priests got rich by issuing indulgences and dispensations; they made their office a stepping stool to worldly power and possessions. Even the Monastic Orders, which took vows of poverty for individuals, grew rich with corporate property, until their wealth became a scandal, even among their own nations.

1292. Misuse of wealth, property, and resources is frequently condemned, and in three ways: (1) do not acquire anything wrongfully or on false pretences; (2) do not hoard or bury or amass wealth for its own sake but use it freely for good, whether for yourself or for your neighbours; and (3) be particularly careful not to waste it for idle purposes, but only so that it may fructify for the good of the people.

35. On the Day when heat¹²⁹³
Will be produced out of
That (wealth) in the fire
Of Hell, and with it will be
Branded their foreheads,
Their flanks, and their backs.
—"This is the (treasure) which ye
Buried for yourselves: ¹²⁹⁴taste ye,
Then, the (treasures) ye buried!"

36. ¹²⁹⁵The number of months
In the sight of God
Is twelve (in a year)—
So ordained by Him
The day He created
The heavens and the earth ;
Of them four are sacred :
That is the straight usage.
So wrong not yourselves ¹²⁹⁶
Therein, and fight the Pagans

٣٥- يَوْمَ يُخْفَىٰ عَلَيْنَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ
تُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَ
ظُهُورُهُمْ

هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ
فَلَوْعُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ○

٣٦- إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ
شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ
ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ فَلَا تَغْلِبُوا فِيهِ
أَنفُسَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ

1293. A very striking metaphor is here used to figure forth the penalty to be suffered by those who misuse wealth, for such misuse is as much a spiritual sin as any other kind of disobedience to God's Will. Such misused wealth will itself become evidence against us. It will be as if the gold and silver will be heated to add to the heat of Hell-fire; that it will brand our foreheads as reflecting on our intelligence in thinking that wealth was a good thing in itself instead of a mere means of doing good; it will brand our flanks (the middle part of our body, supporting the stomach, the seat of greed), as showing that the greed produced no real satisfaction; and it will brand our backs, the source of our stability and strength, as showing that wealth which might have added to our stability and strength, destroys, by its misuse, our stability and strength.

1294. The voice enforces the moral: "did you expect satisfaction or salvation from the treasures that you misused? Behold! they add to your torment!"

1295. This and the following verse must be read together. They condemn the arbitrary and selfish conduct of the Pagan Arabs, who, because there was a long-established custom of observing four months as those in which fighting was forbidden, changed the months about or added or deducted months when it suited them, to get an unfair advantage over the enemy. The four Prohibited Months were: Zul-qa'd, Zul-hajj, Muharram, and Rajab. If it suited them they postponed one of these months, and so a prohibited month became an ordinary month: while their opponents might hesitate to fight, they got an undue advantage. It also upset the security of the Month of Pilgrimage. This very ancient usage made for fair dealing all round, and its infraction by the Pagans is condemned.

The question of a solar astronomical year as against the lunar ecclesiastical year does not arise here. But it may be noted that the Arab year was roughly luni-solar like the Hindu year, the months being lunar and the intercalation of a month every three years brought the year nearly but not accurately up to the solar reckoning. From the year of the Farewell Pilgrimage (A.H. 10) the ecclesiastical year was definitely fixed as a purely lunar year of roughly 354 days, the months being calculated by the actual appearance of the moon. After that, every month of the ecclesiastical year came about 11 days earlier in the solar year, and thus the ecclesiastical months travelled all round the seasons and the solar year. The lunar year remains the ecclesiastical year.

1296. The Muslims were at a disadvantage on account of their scruples about the Prohibited Months. They are told not to wrong themselves in this. If the Pagans fought in all months on one pretence or another, they were allowed to defend themselves in all months. But self-restraint was (as always) recommended as far as possible,

All together as they
Fight you all together.
But know that God
Is with those who restrain
Themselves.

37. Verily the transposing ¹²⁹⁷
(Of a prohibited month)
Is an addition to Unbelief :
The Unbelievers are led
To wrong thereby : for they make
It lawful one year,
And forbidden another year,
In order to adjust the number
Of months forbidden by God
And make such forbidden ones
Lawful. The evil of their course
Seems pleasing to them. ¹²⁹⁸
But God guideth not
Those who reject Faith.

SECTION 6.

38. O ye who believe ! what
Is the matter with you, ¹²⁹⁹
That, when ye are asked
To go forth in the Cause of God,
Ye cling heavily to the earth ? ¹³⁰⁰
Do ye prefer the life
Of this world to the Hereafter ?
But little is the comfort
Of this life, as compared
With the Hereafter.

كَانُوا كَمَا يَقُولُونَ كَذِبًا
وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

٣٧- أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّا أَلْفَيْتُمْ فِي الْكُفْرِ
يُضِلُّ بِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
يُجْعَلُونَ عَامًا وَيُحَرِّمُونَ عَامًا
لِيُوَاطِئُوا حُدُودَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ
فَيُجْعَلُوا مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ
زِينًا لَهُمْ سُوءَ أَعْيُنِهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

٣٨- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ
إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ افْعَلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
أَنَّا قُلْنَا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ أَرْسَلْنَاكُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا مَتَّعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي
الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ

1297. To meddle with an old-established custom of close time for warfare during Prohibited or Sacred Months was not only a demonstration of the Unbelievers against the Muslims on account of their Faith, but was wrong and unjust in itself, as it abolished a wholesome check on unregulated warfare, and prejudiced the law-abiding side by arbitrary decisions.

1298. Cf. vi. 122. The lawless man thinks he is doing a great thing in getting the better of those who are careful to observe a law they believe in. But the lawless man loses the guidance of Faith, which is a symbol of his being guided by God ; he will therefore lose in the end.

1299. The immediate reference is to the expedition to Tabūk (A.H. 9), for which see the Introduction to this Sūra. But the lesson is perfectly general. When a call is made on behalf of a great cause, the fortunate ones are those who have the privilege of responding to the call. The unfortunate ones are those who are so engrossed in their parochial affairs that they turn a deaf ear to the appeal. They are suffering from a spiritual disease.

1300. The choice is between two courses : will you choose a noble adventure and the glorious privilege of following your spiritual leader, or grovel in the earth for some small worldly gain or for fear of worldly loss ? The people who hesitated to follow the call of Tabūk were deterred by (1) the heat of the summer, in which the expedition was undertaken on account of the threat to the existence of the little community, and (2) the fear of losing the fruit harvest, which was ripe for gathering.

39. Unless ye go forth,¹³⁰¹

He will punish you
With a grievous penalty,
And put others in your place;
But Him ye would not harm
In the least. For God
Hath power over all things.

40. If ye help not (your Leader),

(It is no matter): for God
Did indeed help him,¹³⁰²
When the Unbelievers
Drove him out: he had
No more than one companion: ¹³⁰³
They two were in the Cave,
And he said to his companion,
"Have no fear, for God
Is with us": then God
Sent down His peace upon

him,¹³⁰⁴

And strengthened him with forces
Which ye saw not, and humbled ¹³⁰⁵
To the depths the word
Of the Unbelievers.
But the word of God
Is exalted to the heights:
For God is Exalted in might, Wise.

۝۳۹- إِلَّا تَنْفِرُوا يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

وَيَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا خَيْرٌ مِنْكُمْ

وَلَا تَضُرُّوهُ شَيْئًا

وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝

۝۴۰- إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ

إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

ثَانِيًا إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ

إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ

لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّا لَأَنَالَ اللَّهُ مَعَنَا

فَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ

وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا

وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السَّغْلَى

وَكَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا

وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝

1301. *Tanfīrū* = go forth, march onward, be ready to strive and suffer. For this is the condition of all progress in the spiritual and moral, as well as in the physical, world. According to the homely English proverb, God helps those who help themselves. Inactivity and lethargy are fatal. No one can rest on his oars. Man is not necessary to God, but God is necessary to man. If a nation receives favours and fails to deserve them, it will be replaced by another: as has so often happened in history. We may take this as a special warning to Islamic nations.

1302. The Tabūk expedition was not a failure. Though many hesitated, many more joined in. But a more striking example was when the Apostle was hunted out of Mecca and performed his famous *Hijra*. His enemies plotted for his life. He had already sent his followers on to Medina. 'Alī had volunteered to face his enemies in his house. His single companion was Abū Bakr. They two concealed themselves in the case of Thaur, three miles from Mecca, for three nights, with the enemy prowling around in great numbers in fruitless search of them. "We are but two," said Abū Bakr. "Nay," said Muḥammad, "for God is with us." Faith gave their minds peace, and God gave them safety. They reached Medina, and a glorious chapter opened for Islam. The forces that helped them were not seen, but their power was irresistible.

1303. Literally, "the second of two," which afterwards became Abū Bakr's proud title.

1304. Cf. ix. 26.

1305. The superlatives in the Arabic I have rendered by the periphrases, "humbled to the depths" and "exalted to the heights," as they accord better with the genius of the English language. The enemies of Islam had boasted that they would root it out: the result showed them up as ridiculous and despicable.

41. Go ye forth, (whether equipped)¹³⁰⁶
 Lightly or heavily, and strive
 And struggle, with your goods
 And your persons, in the Cause
 Of God. That is best
 For you, if ye (but) knew.

مَنْ يُؤْتِرْ خِفَاكَ وَثِقَاكَ
 وَجَاهِدْ وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ وَالْأَنْفُسُ فِي سَبِيلِ
 اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

42. If there had been
 Immediate gain (in sight),
 And the journey easy,
 They would (all) without doubt
 Have followed thee, but
 The distance was long,
 (And weighed) on them.
 They would indeed swear
 By God, "If we only could,
 We should certainly
 Have come out with you:"
 They would destroy their own
 souls;¹³⁰⁷
 For God doth know
 That they are certainly lying.

مَنْ لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا
 وَسَفَرًا سَهْلًا لَدَبُّواكَ
 وَلَكِنْ بَعُدَتْ
 عَلَيْهِمُ السَّيْرَةُ
 وَسَيَسْأَلُونَ اللَّهَ
 لَوْ أَسْطَعْنَا لَعَرَجْنَا مَعَكُمْ
 يُهْلِكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ
 وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

C. 95.—The Believers do their duty, and make

(ix. 43—72.) No excuses,—unlike the Hypocrites,
 "Who are a burden whether they join you
 Or hold back. No help should be accepted
 From these last, as they are false and insincere,
 And have a slanderous tongue. Alms
 Are for the poor and the needy, not for those
 Who come in hypocrisy and mock
 At things solemn. But the Hypocrites
 Will be found out and receive due punishment,
 While the righteous will be rewarded
 With bliss and the good pleasure of God.

1306. *Whether equipped lightly or heavily*: to be taken both literally and metaphorically. All were invited, and they were to bring such resources as they had,—light-armed or heavy-armed, on foot or mounted, experienced men for posts of danger, raw men for duties for which they were fit. All would and should help. Even those who were too old or feeble to go could contribute such money or resources as they had.

1307. The arts and excuses of the Hypocrites are here exposed. If there had been booty in sight or an easy walk-over, they would have come. All their oaths are false, and in taking the false oaths they are destroying their spiritual life. Indeed the backsliders are jeopardising their own physical lives in hanging back. If the enemy succeeded, they would all suffer.

SECTION 7.

43. God give thee grace!¹³⁰⁸ Why
Didst thou grant them exemption
Until those who told the truth
Were seen in a clear light,
And thou hadst proved the liars?

44. Those who believe in God
And the Last Day ask thee
For no exemption from fighting
With their goods and persons.
And God knoweth well
Those who do their duty.

45. Only those ask thee for exemption
Who believe not in God
And the Last Day, and
Whose hearts are in doubt,
So that they are tossed¹³⁰⁹
In their doubts to and fro.

46. If they had intended
To come out, they would
Certainly have made
Some preparations therefor;
But God was averse
To their being sent forth;
So He made them lag behind,
And they were told,
"Sit ye among those
Who sit (inactive)."

47. If they had come out
With you, they would not

٢٣- عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ

لِمَ أَذْنَتْ لَهُمْ حَتَّى يَكْبِتَ لَكَ الدِّينَ
صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمُ الْكَذِبِينَ ○

٢٤- لَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَ
الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَ
أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ○

٢٥- إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَاتَّبَعَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ
فَقُتِلَتْ فِي رِيحِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ ○

٢٦- وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ
لَأَعَدُّوا لَهُ عُدَّةً
وَلَكِنْ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِيَوْمَئِذٍ الْفُتُورَ
وَقِيلَ اتَّعِدُوا
مَعَ الْقَائِمِينَ ○

٢٧- لَوْ خَرَجُوا فِيكُمْ مَا

1308. Literally, "God give thee forgiveness!" But there is no question of fault here, and Imām Rāzi understands the expression to mean an exclamation,—as one might say in English, "God bless you!" In Shakespeare "God save you!" is a simple friendly greeting, without any question of danger: e.g., in "Much Ado about Nothing," iii. 2. 82. Note that in Q. iii. 152, last clause, "forgiveness" is put in juxtaposition to "grace", as having closely allied meanings. What the Holy Apostle had done in the Tabūk expedition was that he had been granting exemptions which may appear from a military point of view too liberal. He was actuated by motives of kindness as well as policy;—kindness, because, in the urgency of the moment he did not wish any one who had a real excuse to be refused exemption; and policy, because, if any one did not come with hearty good-will, he would be a burden instead of a help to the army. The policy was justified, because in fact 30,000 men or more followed him. But that did not in any way justify the slackers, and in a review of the position, the slackers and hypocrites are justly condemned.

1309. Doubt takes away all stability of conduct, while Faith makes a man firm in action and cool and collected in mind.

51. Say: " Nothing will happen to us
Except what God has decreed
For us: He is our Protector":
And on God let the Believers
Put their trust.

52. Say: " Can you expect for us
(Any fate) other than one
Of two glorious things—
(Martyrdom or victory) ?
But we can expect for you
Either that God will send
His punishment from Himself,
Or by our hands. So wait
(Expectant) ; we too
Will wait with you."¹³¹³

53. Say: " Spend (for the Cause)
Willingly or unwillingly;¹³¹⁴
Not from you will it be
Accepted: for ye are indeed
A people rebellious and wicked."

54. The only reasons why
Their contributions are not
Accepted are: that they reject
God and His Apostle;
That they come to prayer
Without earnestness; and that
They offer contributions
unwillingly.

55. Let not their wealth
Nor their (following in) sons¹³¹⁵

أَمْ قُلُوبُنَا لَنْ يَصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا
هُوَ مَوْلَانَا

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

أَمْ قُلُوبُنَا لَنْ يَصِيبُنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا

أَلْحُسَيْنَيْنِ وَكُنْ نَذِيرٌ بِكُمْ

أَنْ يَصِيبَكُمْ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ أَنْ يَمُرَّ مِنْ عِنْدِ

أَوْ يَأْتِيَنَا فَتَرْكُصُوا

إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُتَرَكُصُونَ

أَمْ قُلُوبُنَا لَنْ يَصِيبُنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا

أَلْحُسَيْنَيْنِ وَكُنْ نَذِيرٌ بِكُمْ

أَنْ يَصِيبَكُمْ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ أَنْ يَمُرَّ مِنْ عِنْدِ

أَوْ يَأْتِيَنَا فَتَرْكُصُوا

إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُتَرَكُصُونَ

أَمْ قُلُوبُنَا لَنْ يَصِيبُنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا

أَلْحُسَيْنَيْنِ وَكُنْ نَذِيرٌ بِكُمْ

أَنْ يَصِيبَكُمْ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ أَنْ يَمُرَّ مِنْ عِنْدِ

أَوْ يَأْتِيَنَا فَتَرْكُصُوا

إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُتَرَكُصُونَ

1313. The waiting of the Unbelievers and that of the Believers are in different senses. The Unbelievers wish for disaster to the Believers, but the Believers will either conquer or die as martyrs in the Cause, in either case happy in the issue. The Believers expect punishment for the Unbelievers for their infidelity, either through their own instrumentality, or in some other way in God's Plan, and the Unbelievers would not like it in either case. Cf. vi, 158.

1314. The Hypocrites, who secretly plotted against Islam, might sometimes (and they did) make a show of making some contribution to the Cause in order to keep up their pretence. Their contributions were not acceptable, whether they seemed to give willingly or unwillingly, because rebellion and disobedience were in their hearts. Three reasons are specifically given for their rejection, in the next verse: (1) they did not believe; (2) their prayers were not earnest, but for mere show; and (3) in reality their hearts were not behind the contributions which they offered. Nothing is acceptable to God which does not proceed from a pure and sincere heart.

1315. If they appeared to be prosperous, with their purses and their quivers full (metaphorically), they were not to be envied. In reality their wealth and their sons might themselves be a snare: Cf. viii, 28. On this particular occasion this was proved to the hilt. The wealth of the Pagans filled them with pride, darkened their understanding, and led to their destruction. Their sons and followers adopted the Faith which their fathers had fought against, much to the chagrin of the fathers, whose spiritual death was even worse than their discomfiture in this world.

Dazzle thee: in reality
God's Plan is to punish them
With these things in this life,¹³¹⁶
And that their souls may perish
In their (very) denial of God.

56. They swear by God
That they are indeed
Of you; but they are not
Of you: yet they are afraid
(To appear in their true colours).

57. If they could find
A place to flee to,
Or caves, or a place
Of concealment, they would
Turn straightway thereto,
With an obstinate rush.¹³¹⁷

58. And among them are men
Who slander thee in the matter
Of (the distribution of) the alms:¹³¹⁸
If they are given part thereof,
They are pleased, but if not,
Behold! they are indignant!

59. If only they had been content
With what God and His Apostle
Gave them, and had said,
"Sufficient unto us is God!
He and His Apostle will soon
Give us of His bounty:
To God do we turn our hopes!"—
(That would have been the right
course).¹³¹⁹

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّيسَةَ
الدُّنْيَا

وَيُزَكِّيَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ○

٥٦- وَيَسْخَرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ لَبِئْسَ كُفْرًا

وَمَا هُمْ بِتَائِبِينَ

وَلَكِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ يَفْقَهُونَ ○

٥٧- لَوْ يَجِدُونَ مَلْجَأًا أَوْ مَخْرَجًا

أَوْ مَكَدًا خَلَا لَوْ كَانُوا آيِينَ

وَهُمْ يَجْعَلُونَ ○

٥٨- وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَلْمِزُكَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ

فَإِنْ أُعْطُوا مِنْهَا رَضُوا وَإِنْ لَمْ يُعْطُوا

مِنْهَا إِذَا هُمْ يَسْخَرُونَ ○

٥٩- وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا

مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ

سَيُؤْتِينَا اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ ۚ

إِنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ ○

1316. Cf. iii. 176-178.

1317. *Jamaḥa*=to be ungovernable, to run like a runaway horse, to rush madly and obstinately.

1318. *Sadaqa*=alms, that which is given in God's name, mainly to the poor and needy, and for the cognate purposes specified in the next verse. *Zakat* is the regular and obligatory charity in an organised Muslim community, usually 2½ per cent. of merchandise and 10 per cent. on the fruits of the earth. There is a vast body of literature on this subject. The main points may be studied in the *Hidāya fil furūḡ*, of Shaikh Burhān-ud-dīn 'Alī.

1319. Selfish men think that charitable funds are fair game for raids, but the Islamic standards on this subject are very high. The enforcement of such standards is always unpopular, and even the Holy Apostle was subjected to obloquy and slander for his strictness to principle. In doubtful cases, claimants who are disappointed should not blame the principles or those who enforce them, but put their trust in God, whose bounties are unbounded, and are given to all, whether rich or poor, according to their needs and their deserts. For every one it is excellent advice to say: *deserve before you desire*.

SECTION 8.

60. Alms are for the poor
And the needy, and those
Employed to administer the (funds);
For those whose hearts
Have been (recently) reconciled
(To Truth); for those in bondage
And in debt; in the cause
Of God; and for the wayfarer: ¹³²⁰
(Thus is it) ordained by God,
And God is full of knowledge
And wisdom.

61. Among them are men
Who molest the Prophet
And say, "He is (all) ear." ¹³²¹
Say, "He listens to what is
Best for you: he believes
In God, has faith
In the Believers, and is a Mercy
To those of you who believe."
But those who molest the Apostle
Will have a grievous penalty.

62. To you they swear by God,
In order to please you:
But it is more fitting
That they should please
God and His Apostle,
If they are Believers.

٦٠- إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالسَّكِينِ
وَالْعَمِلِينَ عَلَيْنَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ
وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ
وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ
قَرِيبَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ٥

٦١- وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ
وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أَذُنٌ لِّغَدِرٍ لَّكُمْ
يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ
لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ٥

٦٢- يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ لِيَرْضَوْكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ
إِنْ كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ٥

1320. Alms or charitable gifts are to be given to the poor and the needy and those who are employed in their service. That is, charitable funds are not to be diverted to other uses, but the genuine expenses of administering charity are properly chargeable to such funds. Who are the needy? Besides the ordinary indigent, there are certain classes of people whose need is great and should be relieved. Those mentioned here are: (1) men who have been weaned from hostility to Truth, who would probably be persecuted by their former associates, and require assistance until they establish new connections in their new environment; (2) those in bondage, literally and figuratively; captives of war must be redeemed; slaves should be helped to freedom; those in the bondage of ignorance or superstition or unfavourable environment should be helped to freedom to develop their own gifts; (3) those who are held in the grip of debt should be helped to economic freedom; (4) those who are struggling and striving in God's Cause, by teaching or fighting or duties assigned to them by the righteous Imam, who are thus unable to earn their ordinary living; and (5) strangers stranded on the way. All these have a claim to charity. They should be relieved by individual or organised effort, but in a responsible way.

1321. The assonance of the Arabic words "ya-ḡana" and "ḡana" is of course lost in the Translation. But the sense remains. Detractors of the Prophet said, "Oh! he listens to everybody!" "Yes," is the answer, "he listens for their good; he is a mercy and a blessing to all men of Faith, but specially to you (who are addressed)". The general statement is emphasised for the particular people addressed.

63. Know they not that for those
Who oppose God and His
Apostle,
Is the Fire of Hell?—
Wherein they shall dwell.
That is the supreme disgrace.

٦٣- أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَن يَحَادِدِ اللَّهَ وَ
رَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا
ذَلِكَ الْبُخْرَى الْعَظِيمُ ۝

64. The Hypocrites are afraid¹³²²
Lest a Sūra should be sent down
About them, showing them what
Is (really passing) in their hearts.
Say: "Mock ye! But verily
God will bring to light all
That ye fear (should be revealed)."

٦٤- يَخْذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ أَنْ تُنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ
سُورَةٌ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
قُلْ اسْتَخِرُوا إِنَّا اللَّهُ
مُخْرِجُ مَا تَخْذَرُونَ ۝

65. If thou dost question them,
They declare (with emphasis):
"We were only talking idly
And in play." Say: "Was it
At God, and His Signs,
And His Apostle, that ye
Were mocking?"

٦٥- وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ
لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ
قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ۝

66. Make ye no excuses:
Ye have rejected Faith
After ye had accepted it.
If We pardon some of you,
We will punish others amongst you,
For that they are in sin.¹³²³

٦٦- لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ
إِنْ نَعْفَ عَنْ طَائِفَةٍ مِنْكُمْ نُعَذِّبْ
طَائِفَةً ۚ يَا كَاهِنُ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ ۝

SECTION 9.

67. The Hypocrites, men and
women,
(Have an understanding) with each
other: ¹³²⁴

٦٧- الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ
فِي بَعْضٍ ۚ

1322. The dissection of the motives of the Hypocrites alarmed them. For it meant that they would fail in their policy of having the best of both worlds and undermining the loyalty of the weaker members of the Muslim community. So they turn it off as a jest. But they are sharply rebuked: "Can you make such solemn matters subjects of playful jokes? Fie upon you! You are found out, and your guile is of no effect." In fact many of the Hypocrites turned over a new leaf and became good Believers afterwards, while a few definitely threw in their lot with the open enemies of Islam and shared their fate. This is referred to in the next verse but one.

1323. See last note. Hypocrisy is a half-way house, a state of indecision in the choice between good and evil. Those who definitely range themselves with good obtain forgiveness; those who pass definitely to evil suffer the penalties of evil.

1324. Literally, "the Hypocrites...are of each other". The forms of hypocrisy may vary, but they are all alike, and they understand each other's hypocrisy. They hold together.

They enjoin evil, and forbid
What is just, and are close¹³²⁵
With their hands. They have
Forgotten God, and He¹³²⁶
Hath forgotten them. Verily
The Hypocrites are rebellious
And perverse.

68. God hath promised the Hypocrites
Men and women, and the rejecters,
Of Faith, the fire of Hell:
Therein shall they dwell:
Sufficient is it for them:
For them is the curse of God,¹³²⁷
And an enduring punishment,—

69. As in the case of those
Before you: they were
Mightier than you in power,
And more flourishing in wealth
And children. They had
Their enjoyment of their portion:
And ye have of yours, as did
Those before you; and ye
Indulge in idle talk
As they did. They!—
Their works are fruitless
In this world and in the Hereafter,
And they will lose
(All spiritual good).

70. Hath not the story reached them
Of those before them?—
The people of Noah, and 'Ad,¹³²⁸
And Thamūd; the people

يَا مُرُودْنَ بِالشُّكْرِ وَيَتَوَنَّ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ
نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ
إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ○

٦٨- وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ
النَّكَارَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ خِلَدِينَ فِيهَا
هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ وَلَعْنَهُمُ اللَّهُ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ○

٦٩- كَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ
مِنْكُمْ قُوَّةً وَكَثُرَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ
فَاسْتَمْتَعُوا بِخَلَائِقِهِمْ فَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ
بِخَلَائِقِكُمْ كَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
بِخَلَائِقِهِمْ وَخَضْتُمْ كَالَّذِينَ خَافُوا
أُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ○

٧٠- أَلَمْ يَأْتِهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَقَادُوتُ وَنُودُوتُ وَقَوْمُ

1325. The English phrase "close-fisted" would cover only a part of the meaning. The hand is the symbol of power, help, and assistance. This may be financial, or it may be in other ways. The Hypocrites pretend a great deal, but are of no use or real help to any one.

1326. Cf. vii. 51 and n. 1029. They ignore God: and God will ignore them.

1327. "Curse," here as elsewhere, is deprivation of grace and mercy, brought about by the rejection of God by the Unbelievers.

1328. The story of Noah is told in vii. 59-64; of 'Ad in vii. 65-72; and of Thamūd in vii. 73-79; of Abraham in numerous places, but see specially vi. 74-82; of Midianites in vii. 83-93; and of Lot and the Cities of the Plain overthrown for their wickedness, in vii. 80-84.

Of Abraham, the men¹³²⁹
Of Midian, and the Cities
overthrown.¹³³⁰
To them came apostles
With Clear Signs. It is
Not God Who wrongs them,
But they wrong their own souls.

71. ~~For~~ The Believers, men
And women, are protectors,
One of another: they enjoin
What is just, and forbid
What is evil: they observe
Regular prayers, practise
Regular charity, and obey
God and His Apostle.
On them will God pour
His mercy: for God
Is Exalted in power, Wise.
72. God hath promised to Believers,
Men and women, Gardens
Under which rivers flow,
To dwell therein,
And beautiful mansions
In Gardens of everlasting bliss.
But the greatest bliss
Is the Good Pleasure of God:
That is the supreme felicity.

إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَأَصْحَابَ الْمَدِينِ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَاتِ
أَنْتُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ
وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

۱- وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ
أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ
وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ
اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ
۲- وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
وَمَسْكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ
وَرِضْوَانٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ
ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

C. 96.—The hardest striving and fighting are needed
(ix. 73-99.) To combat evil and hypocrisy; for sin
Can reach a stage when the doors of forgiveness
Are closed. The good must shun all evil
As unclean, and gladly welcome all chance
Of service and sacrifice, as bringing them closer
To the Presence and Mercy of God.

1329. In the case of Noah and Abraham, the word I have translated as "people of..." is *qawm*; these prophets were messengers each to his own people or nation, as was also Hūd to the 'Ad people and Šālīh to the Thamūd people. The word used for the Midianites is *Aṣ-ṭāb-i-Madyan*, which I have translated "men of Midian" for want of a better word. The Midianites were for the greater part of their history nomads, with pasture grounds but no settled territory or town. The town of Madyan on the Gulf of 'Aqaba refers to much later times when the Midianites as a people had ceased to count. See n. 1053 to vii. 85.

1330. The Cities of the Plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, to whom Lot preached in vain to desist from their abominations; vii. 80-84.

SECTION 10.

73. **O**h Prophet! strive hard against
The Unbelievers and the

Hypocrites,

And be firm against them.
Their abode is Hell,—
An evil refuge indeed.

۞ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ
وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَمَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ
وَرَيْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ۝

74. They swear by God that they
Said nothing (evil), but indeed
They uttered blasphemy,
And they did it after accepting
Islam; and they meditated¹³³¹
A plot which they were unable
To carry out: this revenge
Of theirs was (their) only return
For the bounty with which
God and His Apostle had enriched
Them! If they repent,
It will be best for them;
But if they turn back
(To their evil ways),
God will punish them
With a grievous penalty
In this life and in the Hereafter:
They shall have none on earth
To protect or help them.

۞ يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ مَا قَالُوا
وَلَقَدْ قَالُوا كَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ
وَكَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِسْلَامِهِمْ
وَهُتُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَنْهَوْا
أَنْ أَعْتَدَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
فَإِنْ يَسْتَوُوا يَكْ حَظِيرًا لَهُمْ
وَإِنْ يَتَوَلَّوْا يَعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ
عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ۝

75. Amongst them are men
Who made a Covenant with God,
That if He bestowed on them
Of His bounty, they would give
(Largely) in charity, and be truly
Amongst those who are righteous.

۞ وَمِنْهُمْ مَن عَاهَدَ اللَّهُ
لَئِنْ آتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ
وَلَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ۝

1331. The reference is to a plot made by the Apostle's enemies to kill him when he was returning from Tabūk. The plot failed. It was all the more dastardly in that some of the conspirators were among the men of Medina, who were enriched by the general prosperity that followed the peace and good government established through Islam in Medina. Trade flourished; justice was firmly administered with an even hand. And the only return that these men could make was a return of evil for good. That was their revenge, because Islam aimed at suppressing selfishness, stood for the rights of the poorest and humblest, and judged worth by righteousness rather than by birth or position.

76. But when He did bestow
Of His bounty, they became
Covetous, and turned back
(From their Covenant), averse
(From its fulfilment).

٧٦- فَلَمَّا أَنَّمْنَاهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
بَخِلُوا بِهِ وَتَوَلَّوْا
وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ○

77. So He hath put as a
consequence ¹⁸³²

Hypocrisy into their hearts,
(To last) till the Day whereon
They shall meet Him: because
They broke their Covenant
With God, and because they
Lied (again and again).

٧٧- فَأَعْقَبْنَاهُمْ رِيفَاتٍ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
إِلَى يَوْمٍ لَاقُونَ
بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا اللَّهَ مَا وَعَدُوهُ
وَبِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ ○

78. Know they not that God
Doth know their secret (thoughts)
And their secret counsels,
And that God knoweth well
All things unseen?

٧٨- أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ
وَنَجْوَاهُمْ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ○

79. Those who slander such
Of the Believers as give themselves
Freely to (deeds of) charity,
As well as such as can find
Nothing to give except
The fruits of their labour,—
And throw ridicule on them,— ¹⁸³³
God will throw back

٧٩- الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ
وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ
فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ

1332. If men are false to their covenants and words, the natural consequence will be hypocrisy to cover their falsehood. All consequences of our own acts are in Quranic language ascribed to God. Such consequences will last till the Day of Judgment, when they will have to account for their deeds. They may think that they are deceiving men by their hypocrisy, but they cannot deceive God, to Whom all their most secret thoughts and plots and doings are known.

1333. When financial help is necessary for the Cause, every Muslim contributes what he can. Those who can afford large sums are proud to bring them in of their own free-will, and those who are very poor contribute their mite. Both kinds of gifts are equally precious because of the faith and good-will behind them, and only cynics will laugh at the scantiness of the one or the lavishness of the other. Sometimes they not only laugh, but attribute wrong motives to the givers. Such conduct is here reprimanded.

Their ridicule on them :
And they shall have
A grievous penalty.

80. Whether thou ask
For their forgiveness,
Or not, (their sin is unforgivable) :
If thou ask seventy times ¹³³⁴
For their forgiveness, God
Will not forgive them :
Because they have rejected
God and His Apostle : and God
Guideth not those
Who are perversely rebellious.

SECTION 11.

81. Those who were left behind
(In the Tabūk expedition)
Rejoiced in their inaction
Behind the back of the Apostle
Of God : they hated to strive
And fight, with their goods
And their persons, in the Cause
Of God : they said,
" Go not forth in the heat." ¹³³⁵
Say, " The fire of Hell
Is fiercer in heat." If
Only they could understand !

82. Let them laugh a little :
Much will they weep. ¹³³⁶

سَخِرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ٥

٨٠- اَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ
اَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ
اِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً
فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ
ذَلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ٥

٨١- قَدِرَ السُّخَلَفُونَ بِمَقْعِدِهِمْ خَلْفَ
رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ
وَكِرَهُوا اَنْ يَّجَاهِدُوْا
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاَنْفُسِهِمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ
وَقَالُوْا لَا تَنْفِرُوْا فِي الْحَرِّ
قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ اَشَدُّ حَرًّا
لَوْ كَانُوْا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ٥

٨٢- فَلْيَضْحَكُوْا قَلِيْلًا
وَلْيَبْكُوْا كَثِيْرًا ٥

1334. An awful warning for those who actively oppose the Cause of God. The Holy Apostle was by nature full of mercy and forgiveness. He prayed for his enemies. But in such a case even his prayers are nullified by their attitude of rejecting God.

1335. The Tabūk expedition had to be undertaken hurriedly in the heat of summer, because of a threat or fear of Byzantine invasion. They marched from Medina about the month of September or October in the solar calendar.

1336. They may sneer or ridicule or rejoice now : that will be only for a little ; much will they have to weep for afterwards.

A recompense for the (evil)
That they do.

83. If, then, God bring thee back
To any of them, and they ask
Thy permission to come out
(With thee), say : "Never shall ye
Come out with me, nor fight
An enemy with me :
For ye preferred to sit
Inactive on the first occasion :
Then sit ye (now)
With those who lag behind."

84. Nor do thou ever pray
For any of them that dies,
Nor stand at his grave ; ¹³³⁷
For they rejected God
And His Apostle, and died
In a state of perverse rebellion.

85. Nor let their wealth
Nor their (following in) sons
Dazzle thee : God's Plan
Is to punish them
With these things in this world,
And that their souls may perish
In their (very) denial of God. ¹³³⁸

جَزَاءُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ○

۸۳- فَإِنْ رَجَعَكَ اللَّهُ إِلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِنْهُمْ
فَأَسْأَدُوا نُوكَ لِلْخُرُوجِ
فَقُلْ لَنْ تَخْرُجُوا مَعِيَ أَبَدًا
وَلَنْ تُقَاتِلُوا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا
إِنَّكُمْ رَضِيتُمْ بِالْقُعُودِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ
فَاعْبُدُوا مَعَ الْخَالِفِينَ ○

۸۴- وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ مَاتَ
أَبَدًا وَلَا تَقُمْ عَلَى قَبْرِهِ
لَهُمْ كُفْرًا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
وَمَا تَوْأَاهُمْ فَيَقْتُلُونَ ○

۸۵- وَلَا تَجْعَلْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَوْلَادَهُمْ
إِنَّمَا يَرِيدُ اللَّهُ
أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ
وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ○

1337. On the death of a Muslim, it is the pious duty of every neighbouring Muslim who can, to assist in the simple funeral ceremonies, the prayer for mercy before the body is consigned to the grave and the consignment of the body to the grave, by a simple, solemn, and dignified ritual, in which the rest stand by the grave-side. For those who have shown hostility to Islam, this would not be seemly and is forbidden.

1338. Except for the omission of a single word ("life"), this verse repeats verse 55 above. But the repetition indicates the harmonious closing of the same argument in two aspects. In ix. 55 it occurred in connection with the reasons for refusing to receive the contributions of such persons to the expenses of an enterprise which though vital to Islam's defence was secretly opposed by such persons. Here (in ix. 85) it is a question of refusing to participate in the obsequies of such persons after their death : it is natural to omit the word "life" in this case.

86. ~~When~~ when a Sūra comes down,
 Enjoining them to believe
 In God and to strive and fight
 Along with His Apostle,
 Those with wealth and influence
 Among them ask thee
 For exemption, and say:
 "Leave us (behind): we
 Would be with those
 Who sit (at home)."

87. They prefer to be with
 (the women),
 Who remain behind (at home): ¹³³⁹
 Their hearts are sealed
 And so they understand not.

88. But the Apostle, and those
 Who believe with him,
 Strive and fight with their wealth
 And their persons: for them
 Are (all) good things: ¹³⁴⁰
 For them is prosperity.

89. God hath prepared for them
 Gardens under which rivers flow,

٨٦- وَإِذَا أَنْزَلْتَ سُورَةً أَنْ أَمَرْنَا
 بِاللَّهِ وَجَاهِدْنَا
 مَعَ رَسُولِهِ
 اسْتَأْذَنَكَ أُولُو الطَّوْلِ مِنْهُمْ
 وَقَالُوا اذْهَبْنَا
 نَكُنْ مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ ○

٨٧- رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ
 وَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ
 فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ○

٨٨- لَكِنِ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 مَعَهُ جَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ
 وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الثَّوَابُ
 وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ○

٨٩- أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ

1339. *Khawālif*, plural of *Khālifa*, those (feminine) who remain behind at home when the men go to war; women. There is a stinging taunt in this, a suggestion that such men were cowards, preferring to remain behind like women when stiff work was to be done by men in defending their homes. They were not only cowards, but fools; as they did not understand their own best interests. If the enemy got the better of their brethren, they would themselves be crushed. "Their hearts are sealed": the habits of cowardice and hypocrisy which they have adopted have become their second nature.

1340. "Good things," and "prosperity," are to be understood both in the physical and in the highest spiritual sense as the next verse makes clear.

To dwell therein :
That is the supreme felicity.¹³⁴¹

SECTION 12.

90. And there were, among
The desert Arabs (also),
Men who made excuses
And came to claim exemption ;
And those who were false
To God and His Apostle
(Merely) sat inactive.¹³⁴³
Soon will a grievous penalty
Seize the Unbelievers
Among them.

91. There is no blame¹³⁴³
On those who are infirm,

تَحْتَمِلُهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خُلْدِيْنَ فِيْهَا
ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ۝

۹۰- وَجَاءَ الْمُعَذِّرُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ
لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ وَقَعَدَ الَّذِينَ
كَذَّبُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝

۹۱- لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ

1341. In this verse there is a reminiscence, but not an exact repetition, of verse 72 above. This balances the parallel repetition or reminiscence in verse 85 above. See n. 1338. The symmetry of the argument is thus completed, as regards the Hypocrites of Medina, before we pass on to consider the case of the Hypocrites among the desert Bedouins in section 12.

1342. Not only had the Hypocrites a nest in Medina, but their tactics affected some of the village or desert Bedouins, who loved war and would have followed a standard of war even if no question of Faith or a sacred Cause was involved. But some of them, though professing Islam, were frightened by the hardships of the Tabak expedition and the prospect of meeting the trained armies of the great Roman (Byzantine) Empire. They made all sorts of lying excuses, but really their want of faith made them ineligible for being enlisted in a sacred Cause, in the terms of ix. 46-47 and ix. 53-54. Some came to make excuses; others did not even come, but sat at home, ignoring the summons.

1343. Though active service in person or by contributing resources is expected in emergencies of every person who believes in the Cause, there are some who must necessarily be exempted without the least blame attaching to them. Such would be those who are weak in body on account of age, sex, infirmity, or illness. Personal service in their case is out of the question, but they could contribute towards expenses if they are able. But if they are too poor to afford even such assistance, they are excused. But in all cases the motive must be sincere, and there should be a desire to serve and do such duty as they can. With such motives people are doing good or right in whatever form they express their service: sometimes, in Milton's words, "they also serve who only stand and wait." In any case their purity of motive would get God's grace and forgiveness, and we must not criticise even if we thought they might have done more.

Or ill, or who find
 No resources to spend
 (On the Cause), if they
 Are sincere (in duty) to God
 And His Apostle:
 No ground (of complaint)
 Can there be against such
 As do right: and God
 Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

92. Nor (is there blame)
 On those who came to thee
 To be provided with mounts,¹³⁴⁴
 And when thou saidst,
 "I can find no mounts
 For you," they turned back,
 Their eyes streaming with tears
 Of grief that they had
 No resources wherewith
 To provide the expenses.

93. The ground (of complaint)
 Is against such as claim
 Exemption while they are rich.
 They prefer to stay
 With the (women) who remain
 Behind: God hath sealed
 10 Their hearts; so they know not
 30 (What they miss).¹³⁴⁵

وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا
 يَجِدُونَ
 مَا يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجَ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَ
 رَسُولِهِ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ
 وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

٩٢- وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا أَتَوْكَ
 لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَا أَجِدُ مَا أَحْمِلُكُمْ
 عَلَيْهِمْ
 تَوَلَّوْا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ
 حَزَنًا
 أَلَّا يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ ٥

٩٣- إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
 يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَاءُ
 رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ
 وَطَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ
 لَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ٥

1344. *Ḥamala, yaḥmilu*, here seems to mean: to provide means of transport, *vis.*, mounts (horses, camels, etc.) for riding, and perhaps beasts of burden for carrying equipment and baggage, suitable to the rank of those concerned. It may possibly mean other facilities for getting about, such as boots and shoes, or provisions: for an army's march depends upon all these things. Where people fight as volunteers for a cause, without an extensive war fund, those who can afford it provide such things for themselves, but those without means, yet anxious to serve, have to be left behind. Their disappointment is in proportion to their eagerness to serve.

1345. *Cf.* ix, 87, where similar phrases are used for a similar shirking of duty by towns-folk, while here we are considering the desert folk. It is not only a duty, but a precious privilege, to serve a great Cause by personal self-sacrifice. Those who shirk such an opportunity know not what they miss.

As a fine, and watch
For disasters for you : on them
Be the disaster of Evil :
For God is He that heareth
And knoweth (all things).

مَعْرَمًا وَيَتَرَبَّصُّ بِكُمْ الدَّوَابُّ
عَلَيْهِمْ دَآئِرَةُ السَّوَاءِ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

99. But some of the desert Arabs
Believe in God and the Last Day,
And look on their payments
As pious gifts bringing them
Nearer to God and obtaining
The prayers of the Apostle.
Aye, indeed they bring them
Nearer (to Him) : soon will God
Admit them to His Mercy :¹³⁴⁷
For God is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

۹۹-وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ
الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ
قُرْبَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَصَلَوَاتُ الرَّسُولِ
أَلَّا يَكُنْ قُرْبَىٰ لَهُمْ سِوَا مَا اللَّهُ فِي
رَحْمَتِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُوٌّ رَحِيمٌ

C. 97.—The vanguard of Faith think nothing
(ix. 100-118.) Of self-sacrifice. Their reward is God's
Good Pleasure. Even those who do wrong
But repent will obtain His Mercy : not so
Those who persist in Unfaith, Hypocrisy,
And Mischief. God's grace is free and abounding
For the righteous. Even if they waver
Or fail, He will turn to them in Mercy,
If only they repent and come back unto Him.

SECTION 13.

100. The vanguard (of Islam)—¹³⁴⁸
The first of those who forsook
(Their homes) and of those
Who gave them aid, and (also)
Those who follow them
In (all) good deeds,—
Well-pleased is God with them,
As are they with Him :

۱۰۰-وَالشَّاهِدُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ
مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ
وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ

1347. The Mercy of God is always present, as the sun is always shining. But when we have prepared ourselves to receive it, we come to the full enjoyment of it, as a man who was in a shade comes out by his effort into the open, and basks in sunshine.

1348. The vanguard of Islam—those in the first rank—are those who dare and suffer for the Cause and never flinch. The first historical examples are the Muhājirs and the Anṣār. The Muhājirs—those who forsook their homes in Mecca and migrated to Medina, the holy Apostle being among the last to leave the post of danger, are mentioned first. Then come the Anṣār, the Helpers, the citizens of Medina who invited them, welcomed them, and gave them aid, and who formed the pivot of the new Community. Then are mentioned all who follow them in good deeds : not only the early heroes and ordinary men and women who had been Companions of the Apostle or had seen him, but men and women in all ages who have lived noble lives. In spite of all their sacrifice and suffering they rejoice in the precious gift of the Good Pleasure of God, and their Salvation is the Supreme Felicity which such Good Pleasure gives, symbolised by the Gardens of Heaven.

As a fine, and watch
For disasters for you : on them
Be the disaster of Evil :
For God is He that heareth
And knoweth (all things).

مَعْرَمًا وَيَكْتَبُصْ بِكُمْ الدَّوَابِرَ
عَلَيْهِمْ دَابِرَةُ السَّوْءِ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٥

99. But some of the desert Arabs
Believe in God and the Last Day,
And look on their payments
As pious gifts bringing them
Nearer to God and obtaining
The prayers of the Apostle.
Aye, indeed they bring them
Nearer (to Him) : soon will God
Admit them to His Mercy : ¹³⁴⁷
For God is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

٩٩-وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَ
الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيُعْجِدُ مَا يُنْفِقُ
قُرْبَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَصَلَوَاتِ الرَّسُولِ
إِلَّا أَنهَا قُرْبَىٰ لَهُمْ سَيَدْخُلُوهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي
رَحْمَتِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ٥

C. 97.—The vanguard of Faith think nothing
(ix. 100-118.) Of self-sacrifice. Their reward is God's
Good Pleasure. Even those who do wrong
But repent will obtain His Mercy : not so
Those who persist in Unfaith, Hypocrisy,
And Mischief. God's grace is free and abounding
For the righteous. Even if they waver
Or fail, He will turn to them in Mercy,
If only they repent and come back unto Him.

SECTION 13.

100. The vanguard (of Islam)—¹³⁴⁸
The first of those who forsook
(Their homes) and of those
Who gave them aid, and (also)
Those who follow them
In (all) good deeds,—
Well-pleased is God with them,
As are they with Him :

١٠٠-وَالشَّاهِدُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ
مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ
وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ
رَّضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ

1347. The Mercy of God is always present, as the sun is always shining. But when we have prepared ourselves to receive it, we come to the full enjoyment of it, as a man who was in a shade comes out by his effort into the open, and basks in sunshine.

1348. The vanguard of Islam—those in the first rank—are those who dare and suffer for the Cause and never flinch. The first historical examples are the Muhājirs and the Anṣār. The Muhājirs—those who forsook their homes in Mecca and migrated to Medina, the holy Apostle being among the last to leave the post of danger, are mentioned first. Then come the Anṣār, the Helpers, the citizens of Medina who invited them, welcomed them, and gave them aid, and who formed the pivot of the new Community. Then are mentioned all who follow them in good deeds : not only the early heroes and ordinary men and women who had been Companions of the Apostle or had seen him, but men and women in all ages who have lived noble lives. In spite of all their sacrifice and suffering they rejoice in the precious gift of the Good Pleasure of God, and their Salvation is the Supreme Felicity which such Good Pleasure gives, symbolised by the Gardens of Heaven.

For them hath He prepared
Gardens under which rivers flow,¹³⁴⁹
To dwell therein (for ever):
That is the supreme Felicity.

وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

101. Certain of the desert Arabs
Round about you are Hypocrites,
As well as (desert Arabs) among
The Medina folk: ¹³⁵⁰ they are
Obstinate in hypocrisy: thou
Knowest them not: We know
them:
Twice shall We punish them: ¹³⁵¹
And in addition shall they be
Sent to a grievous Penalty.

۱۰۱- وَامِنْ حَوْلِكَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُنْفِقُونَ
وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَرَدُوا عَلَى الْبَغَائِ
لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ
سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ
ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَى عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ

عَنْ

102. Others (there are who) have
Acknowledged their
wrong-doings:
They have mixed an act
That was good with another ¹³⁵²
That was evil. Perhaps God
Will turn unto them (in mercy):
For God is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

۱۰۲- وَآخَرُونَ اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا
عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

103. Of their goods take alms,
That so thou mightest
Purify and sanctify them;
And pray on their behalf.
Verily thy prayers are a source
Of security for them:
And God is One
Who heareth and knoweth.

۱۰۳- خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً
تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ
إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

1349. Note how this symbolism comes in in the descriptions of the final accomplishment of the destiny of man. In mathematical science it would be like a letter or formula which would sum up a long course of reasoning. In the graphic arts it would be like a Lotus in Buddhism, which expresses a whole complex of emotional or religious experiences. In music it would be like the characteristic notes in a Rāga or Rāgini. In this very Sūra it occurs before in ix. 72 and ix. 89, where see n. 1341. We are considering the good and bad Bedouins and rounding up the argument about them.

1350. The desert Arabs were not all simple folk. There were cunning hypocrites among them: both among certain tribes encamped round about Medina and certain others in Medina itself. I understand that both groups are of the A'rab, to whom the context refers, and not of the settled citizens of Medina, whose Hypocrites were already referred to in previous sections. They might look simple, but they were in their ignorance all the more obstinate and hypocritical.

1351. Their punishment in this world was double, viz., not only in their discomfiture, but because in their obstinate ignorance, they failed to understand the accomplished facts, while cleverer men realised that their hostility to Islam was hopeless. In addition to their discomfiture in this life, they would have to meet the spiritual penalties to come.

1352. There were some whose will was weak and succumbed to evil, although there was much good in them. To them is held out the promise of forgiveness if they would repent and undertake all acts of Muslim charity, which would purify their souls, aided by the prayers of God's Messenger. Then would they get the Peace that comes from purity and right conduct.

104. **ك**now they not that God
Doth accept repentance from
His votaries and receives
Their gifts of charity, and that
God is verily He,
The Oft-Returning, Most Merciful?

١٠٤- أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ
عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَأْخُذُ الصَّدَقَاتِ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝

105. And say: " Work
(righteousness) : ¹³⁵³
God will observe your work,
And His Apostle, and the
Believers :
Soon will ye be brought back
To the Knower of what is
Hidden and what is open :
Then will He show you
The truth of all that ye didl."

١٠٥- وَقُلْ اَعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ
وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ
وَسُرُّدُونَ إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝

106. There are (yet) others,
Held in suspense for the command
Of God, whether He will
Punish them, or turn in mercy ¹³⁵⁴
To them : and God
Is All-Knowing, Wise.

١٠٦- وَأُخْرُونَ مُرْجُونَ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ
إِمَّا يَعْظِيهِمْ وَإِمَّا يَنْتَوِبُ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝

107. **ف**And there are those ¹³⁵⁵
Who put up a mosque

١٠٧- وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا

1353. The repentant should be encouraged, after their repentance, to amend their conduct. The kindly interest of their brethren in them will strengthen them in virtue and blot out their past. When they go back into Eternity, they will understand the healing grace which saved them, just as the evil ones will then have their eyes opened to the real truth of their spiritual degradation (ix. 94). The similar words, in verse 84 and here, clench the contrast.

1354. Three categories of men are mentioned, whose faith was tested and found wanting in the Tabūk affair, but their characteristics are perfectly general, and we may here consider them in their general aspects: (1) the deep-dyed hypocrites, who when found out make excuses because otherwise they will suffer ignominy; they are unregenerate and obstinate, and there is no hope for them (ix. 101); (2) there are those who have lapsed into evil, but are not altogether evil; they repent and amend, and are accepted (ix. 102-105); and (3) there are doubtful cases, but God will judge them (ix. 106). A fourth category is mentioned in ix. 107, which will be discussed later.

1355. Three categories of Hypocrites having already been mentioned (n. 1354), a fourth class of insidious evil-doers is now mentioned, whose type is illustrated in the story of the Qubāa " Mosque of mischief (*ḍhīrār*). " Qubāa is a suburb of Medina, about three miles to the south-east. When the Holy Prophet arrived at Medina for Hijrat, he rested four days in Qubāa before entering the town of Medina. Here was built the first mosque, the " Mosque of Piety " (*Taqwā*), or the mosque of the power of Islam (*Qiwat-ul-Islām*), to which he frequently came during his subsequent stay in Medina. Taking advantage of these sacred associations, some Hypocrites of the Tribe of Banī Ganam built an opposition mosque in Qubāa, pretending to advance Islam. In reality they were in league with a notorious enemy of Islam, one Abū 'Amir, who had fought against Islam at Uḥud and who was now, after the battle of Hunain (A.H. 9), in Syria; his confederates wanted a mosque for him to come to, but it would only be a source of mischief and division, and the scheme was disapproved.

By way of mischief and infidelity—
To disunite the Believers—
And in preparation for one¹³⁵⁶
Who warred against God
And His Apostle aforetime.
They will indeed swear
That their intention is nothing
But good; but God doth declare
That they are certainly liars.

ضَرَارًا وَكَفْرًا وَتَغْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَأَرْصَادًا لِمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَلِيَحْلِفُنَّ إِنْ أَرَادْنَا إِلَّا الْحُسْنَى
وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ
إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ○

108. Never stand thou forth therein.
There is a mosque whose
foundation¹³⁵⁷
Was laid from the first day
On piety; it is more worthy
Of thy standing forth (for prayer)
Therein. In it are men who
Love to be purified; and God
Loveth those who make
themselves pure.¹³⁵⁸

۱۰۸- لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا
لَسَيِّدٌ أَسَسَ عَلَى الْتَقْوَى مِنْ أَوَّلِ
يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ
فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا
وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ ○

109. Which then is best?—he that
Layeth his foundation
On piety to God
And His Good Pleasure?—or he
That layeth his foundation
On an undermined sand-cliff¹³⁵⁹
Ready to crumble to pieces?
And it doth crumble to pieces
With him, into the fire
Of Hell. And God guideth not
People that do wrong.

۱۰۹- أَفَمَنْ أَتَسَسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى
تَقْوَى مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ
خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ بَنَى بُنْيَانَهُ
عَلَى شَفَا جُرُوفٍ هَارٍ
فَأَنهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ○
۱۱۰- لَا يَزَالُ بُنْيَانُهُمُ الَّذِي

110. The foundation of those
Who so build is never free

1356. Abū 'Amir, surnamed the *Rāḥib* (Monk), as he had been in touch with Christian monks. See last note.

1357. The original "Mosque of Piety" built by the holy Apostle himself.

1358. The true Muslim must be pure in body, mind, and heart. His motives should always be sincere, and his religion without any alloy of worldly gain.

1359. A man who builds his life on Piety (which includes sincerity and the purity of all motives) and his hopes on the Good Pleasure of God, builds on a firm foundation of rock that will never be shaken. In contrast to him is the man who builds on a shifting sand-cliff on the brink of an abyss, already undermined by forces which he does not see. The cliff and the foundations all crumble to pieces along with him, and he is plunged into the Fire of misery from which there is no escape.

From suspicion and shakiness¹³⁶⁰
In their hearts, until
Their hearts are cut to pieces.
And God is All-Knowing, Wise.

SECTION 14.

111. God hath purchased of the Believers
Their persons and their goods ;
For theirs (in return)
Is the Garden (of Paradise):¹³⁶¹
They fight in His Cause,
And slay and are slain:
A promise binding on Him
In Truth, through the Law,
The Gospel, and the Qurān:¹³⁶²
And who is more faithful
To his Covenant than God ?
Then rejoice in the bargain
Which ye have concluded:
That is the achievement supreme.

بَنَازِلُهُمْ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَقَطَّعَ
قُلُوبُهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝

١١١

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةُ
يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَ
يُقْتَلُونَ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا
فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغُزَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ
وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ
فَأَنْتُمْ شَرُّ الْبَائِسِينَ الَّذِينَ بَايَعْتُمُوهُ
وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْقَوْلُ الْعَظِيمُ ۝

1360. The parable is continued further. The heart of man is the seat of his hopes and fears, the foundation of his moral and spiritual life. If that foundation is on an undermined sand-cliff already crumbling to pieces, what security or stability can he have? He is being shaken by alarms and suspicions and superstitions, until like the edge of a sand-cliff they are cut clean away and fall into a heap of ruin and his spiritual life and all its land-marks are destroyed.

1361. In a human bargain both sides give something and receive some advantage. In the divine bargain of God with man, God takes man's will and soul and his wealth and goods, and gives him in return ever-lasting Felicity. Man fights in God's Cause and carries out His will, the Universal Will. All that he has to give up is the ephemeral things of this world, while he gains eternal salvation, the fulfilment of his highest spiritual hopes,—a supreme achievement indeed.

1362. We offer our whole selves and our possessions to God, and God gives us Salvation, i.e., eternal freedom from the bondage of this world. This is the true doctrine of redemption; and we are taught that this is the doctrine not only of the Qurān but of the earlier Revelations,—the original Law of Moses and the original Gospel of Jesus. Any other view of redemption is rejected by Islam, especially that of corrupted Christianity, which thinks that some other person suffered for our sins, and we are redeemed by his blood. It is our self-surrender that counts, not other people's merits. Our complete self-surrender may include fighting for the cause, both spiritual and physical. As regards actual fighting with the sword there has been some difference in theological theories at different times, but very little in the practice of those who framed those theories. The Jewish wars were ruthless wars of extermination. The Old Testament does not mince matters on this subject. In the New Testament St. Paul, in commending the worthy fruits of Faith, mentions Gideon, Barak, and other warriors of the Old Testament as his ideals, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens . . ." (Hebrews, xi. 32-34). The monkish morality of the Gospels in their present form has never been followed by any self-respecting Christian or other nation in history. Nor is it common sense to ignore lust of blood in unregenerate man as a form of evil which has to be combated "within the limits set by God" (Q. ix. 112).

Guided them: on the contrary
He will make clear to them
What to fear (and avoid)—
For God hath knowledge
Of all things.

هَدَاهُمْ حَتَّى يَبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ مَا يَتَّقُونَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۝

116. **وَاللَّهُ** Unto God belongeth
The dominion of the heavens
And the earth. He giveth life
And He taketh it. Except for Him
Ye have no protector
Nor helper.

۱۱۶- إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
مَنْ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا نَصِيرٌ ۝

117. God turned with favour
To the Prophet, the Muhājirs ¹³⁶⁸
And the Anṣār,—who followed
Him in a time of distress,
After that the hearts of a part ¹³⁶⁹
Of them had nearly swerved
(From duty); but He turned
To them (also): for He is
Unto them Most Kind,
Most Merciful.

عَالِمُ الْقُدْرَاتِ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْبَيِّنِ وَالْبَاطِنِ
وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ
الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبُ
فَرِيقٍ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ
إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

118. (He turned in mercy also)
To the three who were left
Behind; (they felt guilty) ¹³⁷⁰
To such a degree that the earth

۱۱۸- وَ عَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلْفُوا
حَتَّى إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ

1368. Cf. ix. 100. The Muhājirs were the people who originally forsook their homes in Mecca and followed Muṣṭafā in exile to Medina. The Anṣār were the Medina people who received them with honour and hospitality into their city. Both these groups were staunch supporters of Islam, and proved their Faith by great sacrifices. But in the difficult days of the Tabūk expedition some of them, not perversely, but out of lethargy and human weakness, had failed to follow the standard. They were forgiven, and they afterwards acquitted themselves with zeal.

1369. Note that the "swerving from duty" was merely an inclination due to the weakness of human nature in the face of new difficulties; that it only affected a part of the men for a time; and that it was overcome even in their case by the grace of God, so that they all did their duty, and were freely forgiven their incipient weakness, which they conquered. There were three exceptions, which are referred to in the next verse.

1370. Among the Faithful, the largest number consisted of those who were perfectly staunch and ever ready to do their duty. They obtained the love and good pleasure of God. Next came a few who wavered because their will was weak and they were daunted by the dangers and difficulties that faced them; God's saving grace protected them and they conquered their weakness, and did not fail in their duty; God forgave them and accepted their repentance. Lastly, in the illustration taken from the Tabūk affair, there were some who actually failed in their duty, not from contumacy or ill-will, but from thoughtlessness, slackness, and human weakness: they actually failed to obey the Holy Prophet's summons, and were naturally called on to explain, and were excluded from the life of the Community. Their mental state is here described graphically. Though the earth is spacious, to them it was constrained. In their own souls they had a feeling of constraint. In worldly affluence they felt poor in spirit. They realised that they could not flee from God, but could only find solace and refuge in coming back to Him. They freely repented and showed it in their deeds, and God freely forgave and took them to His grace. Though illustrated by the particular examples of the Anṣār, Ka'b, Marār, and Hīlāl, the lesson is perfectly general and is good for all times.

Seemed constrained to them,
For all its speciousness,
And their (very) Souls seemed
Straitened to them,—
And they perceived that
There is no fleeing from God
And no refuge but to Himself.
Then He turned to them,
That they might repent:
For God is Oft-Returning,
Most Merciful.

بِمَا رَحِمْتَ وَصَافَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ أَنْفُسُهُمْ
وَظَنُوا أَنْ لَا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ
إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ
ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝

C. 98.—To be true in word and deed is to hold
(ix. 119-129.) Our selfish desires at bay, and follow
God's Call: in this is our fullest satisfaction
And reward. But our striving should include
Study and teaching, for the Brethren's benefit.
For God's Message increases our Faith -
And leads us to love Him and trust Him,
The Lord of the Throne of Glory Supreme.

SECTION 15.

119. **Oh** ye who believe! Fear God
And be with those
Who are true (in word and deed).

۱۱۹-يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ۝

120. It was not fitting
For the people of Medina
And the Bedouin Arabs
Of the neighbourhood, to refuse
To follow God's Apostle,
Nor to prefer their own lives
To his: because nothing
Could they suffer or do,
But was reckoned to their credit
As a deed of righteousness,—
Whether they suffered thirst,
Or fatigue, or hunger, in the Cause
Of God, or trod paths
To raise the ire of the Unbelievers,
Or received any injury ¹³⁷¹

۱۲۰-مَا كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ
وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ
أَنْ يَتَخَلَّفُوا عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
وَلَا يَرْغَبُوا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ لَا يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمَأٌ
وَلَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا مَخَصَصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَلَا يَطْرُقُ مَوْطِئًا يَعِظُ الْكَفَّارَ
وَلَا يَنَالُونَ مِنْ عَدُوٍّ كَيْدًا

1371. Again, the illustration is that of Tabūk, but the lesson is general. We must not hold our own comfort or lives dearer than that of our Leader, nor desert him in the hour of danger. If we have true devotion, we shall hold our own lives or comfort cheap in comparison to his. But whatever service we render to the Cause of God, and whatever sufferings, hardships, or injuries we endure, or whatever resources we spend for the Cause,—all goes to raise our degree in the spiritual world. Nothing is lost. Our reward is far greater in worth than any little service we can render, or any little hardship we can suffer, or any little contributions we can make to the Cause. We "painfully attain to joy".

Whatever from an enemy:
For God suffereth not
The reward to be lost
Of those who do good;—

121. Nor could they spend anything
(For the Cause)—small or great—
Nor cut across a valley,¹³⁷²
But the deed is inscribed
To their credit; that God
Might requite their deed
With the best (possible reward).

122. **Q**or should the Believers
All go forth together:
If a contingent
From every expedition
Remained behind,
They could devote themselves
To studies in religion,
And admonish the people
When they return to them,—
That thus they (may learn)¹³⁷³
To guard themselves (against evil).

SECTION 16.

123. **O**h ye who believe! Fight
The Unbelievers who gird you
about,¹³⁷⁴
And let them find firmness
In you: and know that God
Is with those who fear Him.

إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضَيِّعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ٥

١٢١- وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ نَفَقَةً صَغِيرَةً وَلَا
كَبِيرَةً

وَلَا يَقْطَعُونَ أَوْدِيًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ
بِخَيْرٍ لَّهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ٥

١٢٢- وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً
فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ
لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ
وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ٥

١٢٣- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ
يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلَظَةً
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ٥

1372. *Cut across a valley*: this is specially mentioned in a synibolical way, as denoting an individual act of heroism, dash, or bravery. To march with the troops along valleys, or, spiritually, tread paths of danger along with our Comrades, is good and praiseworthy; but one that dashes across a stream, all alone, for some special deed of bravery where the *elan* of comradeship does not sustain him, needs special mention. Notice that both the things mentioned in this verse,—the spending of resources and the dashing across a valley—are individual acts, while those mentioned in the last verse are collective acts, which are in some ways easier. The individual acts having been mentioned, the next verse follows naturally.

1373. Fighting may be inevitable, and where a call is made by the righteous Imām, it should be obeyed. But fighting is not to be glorified to the exclusion of all else. Even among those who are able to go forth, a party should remain behind—one in each township or circle—for purposes of study; so that when the fighters return home, their minds may be attuned again to the more normal interests of religious life, under properly instructed teachers. The students and teachers are soldiers of the *Jihād* in their spirit of obedience and discipline.

1374. When conflict becomes inevitable, the first thing is to clear our surroundings of all evil; for it is only evil that we can rightly fight. To evil we must put up a stout and stiff resistance. Mealy-mouthed compromises are not right for soldiers of truth and righteousness. They are often a compound of cowardice, weariness, greed, and corruptibility.

124. Whenever there cometh down
- ¹³⁷⁵

A Sūra, some of them say :
 "Which of you has had
 His faith increased by it?"
 Yea, those who believe,—
 Their faith is increased,
 And they do rejoice.

١٢٤- وَإِذَا مَا أُنزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَمِنْهُمْ مَن
 يَقُولُ أَتَكُونُ نَادِيَهُ هَذِهِ آيَاتُنَا
 فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا
 وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ○

125. But those in whose hearts
- ¹³⁷⁶

Is a disease,—it will add doubt
 To their doubt, and they will die
 In a state of Unbelief.

١٢٥- وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَتْهُمْ
 رِجْسًا إِلَى رِجْسِهِمْ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ○

126. See they not that they

Are tried every year ¹³⁷⁷
 Once or twice? Yet they
 Turn not in repentance,
 And they take no heed.

١٢٦- أَوَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُونَ فِي كُلِّ
 عَامٍ مَرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لَا يَتُوبُونَ
 وَلَا هُمْ يَذْكُرُونَ ○

127. Whenever there cometh down

A Sūra, they look at each other,
 (Saying), "Doth any one see
 you?"

Then they turn aside:
 God hath turned their hearts ¹³⁷⁸
 (From the light); for they
 Are a people that understand not.

١٢٧- وَإِذَا مَا أُنزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ نَظَرَ بَعْضُهُمْ
 إِلَى بَعْضٍ هَلْ يَرِيكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ ثُمَّ انصَرَفُوا صَرَفَ
 اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ○

128. How hath come unto you
-
- An Apostle from amongst

١٢٨- لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ

1375. The incompatibility of Unfaith and Faith are contrasted in this section in respect of revelation and the divine teacher. The Unbelievers laugh at revelation, and say to each other mockingly: "Does this increase your faith?" To the Believer every new aspect of God's truth as revealed increases his faith, and wonder, and gratitude. He rejoices, because he gets added strength for life and achievement.

1376. Cf. ii. 10 and several similar passages. Just as the light, which to healthy eyes gives enlightenment, causes pain to the diseased eye, which emits unclean matter, so, to those spiritually diseased, God's grace is unwelcome and they put forth more doubts to cover their disease. And they die in their disease, and of their disease. Note the aptness of the metaphor.

1377. Yet, in spite of their infidelity, one or two chances are given them every year. The door is not closed to them. Yet they deliberately turn away, and take no heed of all the warnings which their own nature and the teaching and example of good men should give them.

1378. Even the Unbelievers, in their heart and conscience, feel uncomfortable when they turn aside from Faith and Truth, and therefore their turning aside is figured by furtive glances, such as we may suppose literally to have been cast by the Hypocrites in the assemblies of the holy Apostle. Then they slink away, feeling superior in their minds. And yet, if they only knew it, their contumacy deprives them of God's grace and light. They are turning Grace away, and when God withdraws it altogether, they perish utterly.

Yourselves: it grieves him
That ye should perish:
Ardently anxious is he
Over you: to the Believers
Is he most kind and merciful.¹⁸⁷⁰

129. But if they turn away,
Say: "God sufficeth me:
There is no god but He:
On Him is my trust,—
He the Lord of the Throne
(Of Glory) Supreme!"¹⁸⁸⁰

أَنْفُسِكُمْ غَزِيرٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ
عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

۱۲۹- فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ ۚ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ
الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ۝



1379. The tender heart of the Teacher is grieved that any among his flock should rush headlong to ruin. He watches ardently over them, and whenever any of them show signs of Faith, his kindness and mercy surround him and rejoice over him.

1380. But if the Message is rejected, he still proclaims the burning Faith of his heart, which is unquenchable. God is all in all. To trust Him is to find the accomplishment of all spiritual desire. His grandeur is figured by a lofty Throne, supreme in glory!

Thus have we been led, through a notable incident in Muṣṭafā's earthly career, to truths of the highest spiritual import.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA X (*Yūnus*).

Chronologically this Sūra and the five that follow (Sūras xi, xii, xiii, xiv, and xv) are closely connected, and were revealed in the late Meccan period, as the great event of the Hijrat was gradually approaching down the stream of Time. But their chronology has no particular significance.

On the other hand their arrangement in the gradation of Quranic teaching fits in with the subject-matter. S. viii. and S. ix. were mainly concerned with the first questions that arose on the formation of the new and organised Community of Islam in its conflict with those who wished to suppress or destroy it or use force to prevent its growth and the consolidation of its ideals. See Introductions to those Sūras. The present group leads us to the questions that face us when external hostility has been met, and our relations to God have to be considered from a higher stand-point than that of self-preservation. How does revelation work? What is the meaning of divine grace and its withdrawal? How do the Messengers of God deliver their Message? How should we receive it?

All these questions revolve round the revelation of the Qurān and each Sūra of this group except the 13th has the Abbreviated Letters A. L. R. attached to it. S. xiii. has the letters A. L. M. R., and we shall discuss this variation when we come to S. xiii.

As shown in Appendix I (Sīpāra 3), the Abbreviated Letters are mystic symbols, about whose meaning there is no authoritative explanation. If the theory advanced in n. 25 to ii. 1 has any validity, and the present group A. L. R. is cognate to the group A. L. M., we have to consider and form some idea in our minds as to the probable meaning of the variation. We took A. L. M. to be a symbol of those Sūras that deal with the beginning, the middle, and the end of man's spiritual history,—the origin, the present position, and the things to come in the Last Days (eschatology, to use a theological term). We took A. L. to stand as symbols of the first two, and M. of the last. In the present group of Sūras we find hardly any eschatological matter, and therefore we can understand the absence of M., the symbol standing for such matter. In its place comes R., which is phonetically allied to L. L. is produced by the impact of the tongue to the front of the palate, and R. to the middle of the palate. In many languages the letters L. and R. are interchangeable; e.g., in Arabic, *al Raḥmān* becomes ar-Raḥmān, and R. in imperfect enunciation becomes L., as in Chinese lallation. If L. is a symbol of present-day things looking to the future, we may take R. as a symbol of present-day things looking within, i.e., into the interior of the organisation of the Ummat. And this symbolism fits in with the subject-matter of the Sūras in question. But no one should be dogmatic in speculation about mystic Symbols.

Let us now consider Sūra X alone. The central theme is that God's wonderful Creation must not be viewed by us as a creation of material things only, once made and finished with. Most wonderful of all is how He reveals Himself to men through

Apostles and Scriptures ; how Apostles are rejected by men, and the Message disbelieved until it is too late for repentance ; and how, as in the case of Yünus (Jonah) and his people, even the rejection (when repentance supervenes) does not prevent God's grace and mercy from working, and how far that working is beyond man's comprehension.

Summary

The wonderful working of the Spirit of God through man by revelation seems like magic to men ; yet they could find Signs and Messages from Him in the sun and the moon and the constantly varying yet regular phenomena of nature, from which man should take a lesson of constancy and Faith (x. 1-20, and C. 99).

All the goodness or beauty that man meets in the life around him proceeds from God. Yet man is blind and will not understand (x. 21-40, and C. 100).

As all things and beings proceed from God, so will they return to Him, and He is ever true. Why then does ungrateful man make untrue phantoms for himself instead of rejoicing in the good news which He sends ? (x. 41-70, and C. 101).

God revealed Himself through Noah, but Noah's people rejected him and perished. He spoke through Moses to Pharaoh, but Pharaoh was stiff-necked and arrogant, and when he repented at all, it was too late. (x. 71-92, and C. 102).

Everywhere want of faith causes people to perish. But the people of Yünus repented, and God saved them by His wonderful grace. So God will deliver the Believers. When the Truth comes from God, follow it and be patient, for God is the most righteous of Judges (x. 93-109, and C. 103).

C. 99.—Men may wonder that a man
 (x. 1—20.) Like unto them should bring a Message
 From God, but God's Message shines
 Forth through all nature and Creation.
 He guides the human spirit, if only
 Man will have Faith and put his hope
 In God. Wonderful are God's relations
 With man, yet man is ungrateful
 And runs to fancies and fanciful gods.
 Glory to the One true God, Who made
 Mankind as One, and holds alone
 The secrets of the Unseen in His
 Great and good Universal Plan.

Sūra X.

Yūnus, or Jonah.

In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. **M. L. R.**¹³⁸¹

These are the Āyats¹³⁸²
Of the Book of Wisdom.

2. Is it a matter

Of wonderment to men
That We have sent
Our inspiration to a man
From among themselves?—¹³⁸³
That he should warn mankind
(Of their danger), and give
The good news to the Believers
That they have before their Lord
The lofty rank of Truth,¹³⁸⁴
(But) say the Unbelievers:
"This is indeed
An evident sorcerer!"

3. Verily your Lord is God,
Who created the heavens
And the earth in six Days,¹³⁸⁵



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
١- أَلَمْ نَكُنْ
تِلْكَ آيَاتِ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ
٢- أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا
أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ
مِنْهُمْ أَنْ أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ
وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
أَنْ لَهُمْ قَدْ مَرَّ صَدَقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
قَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ
إِنَّ هَذَا سَحَرٌ مَقِينٌ
٣- إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ

النزل

سورة النور

1381. For the Abbreviated Letters generally as mystic Symbols, see Appendix I. For this particular combination see the Introduction to this Sūra.

1382. Āyāt=Signs, or Verses of the Qurān. Here both meanings are to be understood. Each verse is a nugget of wisdom. And in the verses immediately following, e.g., x. 3-6, examples are given of the wonders of God's material Creation. If the starry heavens impress us with their sublimity as Signs of God's wisdom and power, how much more wonderful is it that He should speak to lowly man through His Messengers, in man's own language, so that he can understand?

1383 Is it not still more wonderful that the inspired man should be one of ourselves? The Arabs had known Muḥammad in other relations and conditions, and when the mighty Message came through his mouth—the message of Wisdom and Power, such as no man could speak as from himself, least of all a man not instructed in human learning,—they could only in their wonder attribute it to magic and sorcery. They failed to understand that magic and sorcery were projections of their own mind, while here was solid, enduring Truth from God!

1384. God's Message was and is not all smooth and agreeable. The first thing is to convince us of our sin and wrong-doing, and warn us of our danger. If we have Faith, we then learn what a high rank we obtain in the sight of God, through His glorious Truth, which makes us pure and free.

And is firmly established ¹³⁸⁶

On the Throne (of authority),
Regulating and governing all things.
No intercessor (can plead with Him)

Except after His leave
(Hath been obtained). This
Is God your Lord ; Him therefore
Serve ye : will ye not
Celebrate His praises ? ¹³⁸⁷

4. To Him will be your return—

Of all of you. The promise
Of God is true and sure. ¹³⁸⁸

It is He who beginneth

The process of creation, ¹³⁸⁹

And repeateth it, that He

May reward with justice

Those who believe

And work righteousness,

But those who reject Him

Will have nothing but draughts ¹³⁹⁰

Of boiling fluids,

And a Penalty grievous :

Because they did reject Him.

5. It is He who made the sun

To be a shining glory ¹³⁹¹

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ

يُذَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ

مَا مِنْ شَافِعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ

ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ

أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

هـ ۞ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا

إِنَّهُ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ

لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

بِالْقِسْطِ

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ

وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۞ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ

هـ هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً

1386. *Istawā*, with the preposition *ilā* after it, means "to design, to set oneself to execute a design;" hence in ii. 29, I have translated, "His design comprehended the heavens," to emphasise the fact that the heavens were not eternal or co-eternal with Him, but were a part of His design, and in a sense, as they appear to man subjectively, a complement to the creation of man's Earth. With the preposition *alā* after it, as here and in vii. 54 and elsewhere, the meaning seems to be literally, "to mount or ascend," and figuratively to be firmly established, to sit firm and unshaken, beyond question." The Throne of authority represents symbolically many ideas: e. g., (1) that God is high above all His Creation; (2) that He regulates and governs it, as a king does, whose authority is unquestionably recognised; (3) that He is not, therefore, like the gods of Greece and paganism, who were imagined to be in a world apart, careless of mankind, or jealous of mankind, but on the contrary, He (4) disposes of their affairs and all affairs continuously and with justice; (4) that the authority of His prophets, ministers, and messengers is derived from Him, and such intercession as they can make is by His will and permission.

1387. Cf. iii. 191.

1388. *Ḥaqq*: true, right, for just ends, in right proportions, sure and certain: all these ideas are implied.

1389. Cf. n. 120 to ii. 117. God's creation is not a simple act, once done and finished with. It is continuous, and there are many stages, not the least important of which is the Hereafter, when the fruits of our life will be achieved.

1390. *Ḥamīm*: boiling fluid; it is associated, as in xxviii. 57, with *gassāq*, a dark, murky, or intensely cold fluid; both symbols of the grievous penalty that results from rebellion against God.

1391. The fitting epithet for the sun is *dhawā*, "splendour and glory of brightness", and for the moon is "a light" (of beauty), the cool light that illuminates and helps in the darkness of the night. But the moon is also a measure of time. The simplest observation can keep pace with the true lunar months and lunar years, which are all that is required by a pastoral people. For agriculture solar years are required, as they indicate the changes of the seasons, but ordinary solar years are never exact; even the solar year of 365½ days requires correction by advanced astronomical calculation.

And the moon to be a light
(Of beauty), and measured out
Stages for her, that ye might
Know the number of years
And the count (of time).
Nothing did God create
But in truth and righteousness.¹³⁹²
(Thus) doth He explain His Signs
In detail, for those who
understand.¹³⁹³

6. Verily, in the alternation
Of the Night and the Day,
And in all that God
Hath created, in the heavens
And the earth, are Signs
For those who fear Him.¹³⁹⁴
7. ~~For~~ Those who rest not their hope
On their meeting with Us,
But are pleased and satisfied
With the life of the Present,
And those who heed not
Our Signs,—¹³⁹⁵
8. Their abode is the Fire,
Because of the (evil)
They earned.
9. Those who believe,
And work righteousness,—
Their Lord will guide them
Because of their Faith :¹³⁹⁶

وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ
لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ
مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ
ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ
يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ○

٦- إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
آيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ○

٧- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا
وَرَضُوا بِأَحْيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَأُطْمَأْنِنُوا بِهَا
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ ○

٨- أُولَٰئِكَ مَا لَهُمْ النَّارُ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْسِبُونَ ○

٩- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِآيَاتِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِنْ

1392. Everything in God's creation has use and purpose, and fits into a Design. It is true in every sense of the word and it is good and just. It is not merely a matter of sport or freak (xxi. 16). Though so varied, it proclaims God's Unity; though a limited free-will is granted to creatures, the results of evil (which is rebellion) are neutralised and harmony is restored.

1393. Cf. ix. 11.

1394. Cf. ii. 164.

1395. Those who fall from Grace are described by three epithets : (1) the meeting with God is not the object of their hope and earnest desire, but something else, viz. (2) the material good of this world, which not only attracts them but apparently gives them complete satisfaction, so that there is no glow of the Future in their horizon, and (3) they are deaf and dead to the resounding and living Message of God. (1) and (2) refer to the extinction of Faith in them, and (3) to their falling a prey to the evils of this world in their conduct. They are contrasted in x. 9 with the Faith and the Righteousness of those who accept Grace.

1396. Their Faith is the cause as well as the instrument of their Guidance,—the Kindly Light which leads them as well as the Joy which fills their Soul. The usual symbols of Gardens and Fire are again contrasted,—in each case the result of Good or Evil in Life.

Beneath them will flow
Rivers in Gardens of Bliss.

10. (This be) their cry therein :
"Glory to Thee, Oh God!"
And "Peace" be their greeting
therein !
And the close of their cry ¹³⁹⁷
Will be : "Praise be to God,
The Cherisher and Sustainer
Of the Worlds !"

SECTION 2.

11. If God were to hasten for men
The ill (they have earned)
As they would fain hasten on
The good,—then would
Their respite be settled at once. ¹³⁹⁸
But We leave those
Who rest not their hope
On their meeting with Us,
In their trespasses, wandering
In distraction to and fro.
12. When trouble toucheth a man,
He crieth unto Us
(In all postures)—lying down ¹³⁹⁹
On his side, or sitting,
Or standing. But when We
Have solved his trouble,
He passeth on his way as if
He had never cried to Us
For a trouble that touched him !
Thus do the deeds of transgressors
Seem fair in their eyes ! ¹⁴⁰⁰

تَحْتَهُمْ إِلَّا نَهْرٌ فِي جَدَّتِ التَّعْيمِ

١٠- دَعْوُهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ

وَتَحِيَّاتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ

وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ

أَنَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ٥

١١- وَلَوْ يُعَجِّلُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ
اسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ يَا خَيْرَ الْخُصَى إِلَيْهِمْ
أَجَلُهُمْ
فَتَذَرُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا
فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ٥

١٢- وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا
لِجَنبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَائِمًا
فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ
مَرَّ كَانَ ثُمَّ يَدْعُنَا إِلَى ضُرِّ مَسَّهُ
كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ لِلنَّاسِ خَيْرَاتِهِمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ٥

1397. A beautiful piece of spiritual melody ! They sing and shout with joy, but their joy is in the Glory of God ! The greetings they receive and the greetings they give are of Peace and Harmony ! From first to last they realise that it is God Who cherished them and made them grow, and His rays are their Light.

1398. Those who have no spiritual hope for the Future grasp at any temporary advantage, and in their blindness even mockingly ask for immediate punishment for their sins (viii. 32), thus vainly challenging God, in Whom they do not believe. If the beneficent God were to take them at their word, they would have no chance at all. Their doom would be sealed. But even the respite they get they use badly. They merely wander about distractedly like blind men, to and fro. Cf. ii. 15.

1399. Not only do men fail to use their respite : even those who have a superficial belief in God call on Him in their trouble but forget Him when He has relieved their trouble. Their Faith is not strong enough to make them realise that all good proceeds from God. But in moments of trouble they use every position, literally and figuratively, to appeal to Him.

1400. Those without Faith are selfish, and are so wrapped up in themselves that they think every good that comes to them is due to their own merits or cleverness. That is itself a cause of their undoing. They do not see their own faults.

13. Generations before you
We destroyed when they
Did wrong : their Apostles
Came to them with Clear Signs,
But they would not believe !
Thus do We requite
Those who sin !

14. Then We made you heirs
In the land after them,
To see how ye would behave ! ¹⁴⁰¹

15. But when Our Clear Signs
Are rehearsed unto them,
Those who rest not their hope
On their meeting with Us,
Say : " Bring us a Reading ¹⁴⁰²
Other than this, or change this,"
Say : " It is not for me,
Of my own accord,
To change it : I follow
Naught but what is revealed
Unto me : if I were
To disobey my Lord,
I should myself fear the Penalty
Of a Great Day (to come)."

16. Say : " If God had so willed,
I should not have rehearsed it
To you, nor would He
Have made it known to you. ¹⁴⁰³
A whole lifetime before this
Have I tarried amongst you :
Will ye not then understand ?" ¹⁴⁰⁴

۱۳- وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونََ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَاءَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا
كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ○

۱۴- ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ○

۱۵- وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ
قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا
أَنْتُمْ بِقُرْآنٍ غَيْرِ هَذَا أَوْ بَدِّلْهُ
قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي
أَنْ أُبَدِّلَ مِنْ تِلْكَ آيٍ نَفْسِي
إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا مَا يَوْسَىٰ إِلَىٰ إِيَّائِي أَخَافُ
إِنْ عَصَيْتُمْ رَأَيْتُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ○

۱۶- قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَكُونُونَ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرِكُكُمْ بِهِ ۚ
فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّن قَبْلِهِ
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ○

1401. This is addressed to the Quraish in the first instance, for they had succeeded to the 'Ad and the Thamūd heritage. But the application is universal, and was true of the 'Abbāsi Empire in the time of Hārūn-ar-Rashid, or the Muslim Empire in Spain or the Turkish Empire in its palmiest days, and indeed, apart from political power, to the Muslims and non-Muslims of our own days.

1402. Reading : in the Arabic, the word is "Qurān", which may mean Reading or in the special sense, the Qurān. The duty of God's Messenger is to deliver God's Message as it is revealed to him, whether it please or displease those who hear it. Selfish men want to read their own desires or fancies into religious precepts, and thus they are often willing to use Religion for their own ends. Most of the corruptions of Religion are due to this cause. But Religion is not to be so prostituted.

1403. It is in God's Plan that He should reveal Himself in certain ways to His creatures, and His Messengers are the instruments that carry out His Will. It is in itself His gracious Mercy that He should thus make His Will known. We should be grateful for His guidance instead of carping at it.

1404. Muḥammad Muḥafā had lived his whole life of purity and virtue amongst his people, and they knew and acknowledged it before He received his mission. They knew he loved his nation and was loyal to it. Why should they turn against him when he had to point out under inspiration all their sins and wrong-doing? It was for their own good. And he had to plead again and again with them : " will you not understand, and see what a glorious privilege it is for you to receive true guidance from God ?"

17. ~~Who~~ Who doth more wrong
Than such as forge a lie
Against God, or deny
His Signs? But never
Will prosper those who sin.
18. They serve, besides God,
Things that hurt them not
Nor profit them, and they say:
"These are our intercessors
With God." Say: "Do ye
Indeed inform God of something
He knows not, in the heavens¹⁴⁰⁶
Or on earth?—Glory to Him!
And far is He above the partners
They ascribe (to Him)!"
19. Mankind was but one nation,¹⁴⁰⁶
But differed (later). Had it not
Been for a Word¹⁴⁰⁷
That went forth before
From thy Lord, their differences
Would have been settled
Between them.
20. They say: "Why is not
A Sign sent down to him
From his Lord?" Say:
"The Unseen is only
For God (to know).
Then wait ye: I too

١٧- فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى
عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ
إِنَّهُ لَا يَفْضَحُ السَّجْرُمُونَ ○

١٨- وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا
يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ
شُفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتَكْتُمُونَ اللَّهَ
بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
سُبْحَنَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ○

١٩- وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلَّا أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً
فَاخْتَلَفُوا
وَلَوْ لَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
لَفُضِّى بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ○

٢٠- وَيَقُولُونَ لَوْلَا أَنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ
رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعَيْبُ لِلَّهِ فَانْتَظِرُوا
إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ

1405. When we shut our eyes to God's glory and goodness, and go after false gods, we give some plausible excuse to ourselves, such as that they will intercede for us. But how can stocks and stones intercede for us? And how can men intercede for us, when they themselves have need of God's Mercy? Even the best and noblest cannot intercede as of right, but only with His permission (x. 3). To pretend that there are other powers than God is to invent lies and to teach God. There is nothing in heavens or earth that He does not know, and there is no other like unto Him.

1406. Cf. ii. 213. All mankind was created one, and God's Message to mankind is in essence one, the Message of Unity and Truth. But as selfishness and egotism got hold of man, certain differences sprang up between individuals, races, and nations, and in His infinite Mercy He sent them messengers and messages to suit their varying mentality, to test them by His gifts, and stir them up to emulation in virtue and piety (v. 51).

1407. Here we have again the mystic doctrine of "the Word". Cf. vi. 115, ix. 40 and iv. 171. "Word" is the Decree of God, the expression of His Universal Will or Wisdom in a particular case. When men began to diverge from one another (see last note), God made their very differences subserve the higher ends by increasing their emulation in virtue and piety, and thus pointing back to the ultimate Unity and Reality.

Will wait with you." 1408

قَرْنِ الْمُنْتَظَرِينَ ۝

- C. 100.—The good, the beautiful, and the useful
(x. 21—40.) In man's life are derived from God ;
Yet man is ungrateful. He runs
After the ephemeral things of this life ;
Yet they are no better than the green
Of the fields, that lasts for a season
Ere it perish ! God's call is to an eternal
Home of Peace. Will ye not answer it ?
Know ye not that it is He Who sustains
And cherishes ? No partner has He.
And He speaks to His Creatures and guides them
Through His wonderful Book unmatched.

SECTION 3.

21. ~~W~~hen We make mankind
Taste of Our mercy after
Adversity hath touched them,
Behold ! they take to plotting
Against Our Signs ! Say :
"Swifter to plan is God !"
Verily, Our messengers record
All the plots that ye make ! 1409

۲۱- وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوا
ضَرَاءَ مَشْتَهُمُ إِذَا لَهُمْ مَكْرٌ فِي آيَاتِنَا
قُلِ اللَّهُ أَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا
إِنَّ رُسُلَنَا يَكْتُبُونَ مَا تَكْفُرُونَ ۝

22. He it is who enableth you
To traverse through land
And sea ; so that ye board
Ships ;—they sail with them
With a favourable wind,
And they rejoice thereat.
Then comes a stormy wind
And the waves come to them
From all sides, and they think
They are being overwhelmed :
They cry unto God, sincerely
Offering (their) duty unto Him,
Saying, "If Thou dost deliver us
From this, we shall truly

۲۲- هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ
حَتَّى إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِ
وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِمْ بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا
جَاءَتْهُمْ رَائِدَةٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ
مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ
بِهِمْ دَعَاوُ اللَّهِ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۚ
لَئِنْ أَجَبْنَاهُمْ مِنْ هَٰذَا

1408. Their demand for a Sign is disingenuous. All nature and revelation furnishes them with incontestable Signs. What they want is the Book of the Unseen opened out to them like the physical leaves of a book. But they forget that a physical Book is on a wholly different plane from God's Mysteries, and that their physical natures cannot apprehend the mysteries. They must wait. Truth will also wait. But the waiting in the two cases is in quite different senses. Cf. vi. 158 and ix. 52.

1409. Man turns his thoughts in adversity to the spiritual forces outside his ken. But as soon as the trouble is past, he not only forgets them but actually plots against them, as if they—and not he himself—had caused his trouble. But such people are poor ignorant creatures, not realising that the Universal Plan of God is swifter to stop their petty plans, and that though they fail, the record of them remains eternally against them.

Show our gratitude ! " 1410

23. But when he delivereth them,
Behold! they transgress
Insolently through the earth
In defiance of right!
Oh mankind! your insolence ¹⁴¹¹
Is against your own souls,—
An enjoyment of the life
Of the Present: in the end,
To Us is your return,
And We shall show you
The truth of all that ye did.

24. ~~The~~ The likeness of the life
Of the Present is
As the rain which We
Send down from the skies : ¹⁴¹²
By its mingling arises
The produce of the earth—
Which provides food
For men and animals :
It grows till the earth
Is clad with its golden
Ornaments and is decked out
(In beauty) : the people to whom
It belongs think they have
All powers of disposal over it :
There comes Our command
By night or by day,
And We make it
Like a harvest clean-mown,
As if it had not flourished

لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ○

٢٣- فَلَمَّا أَفْجَاهُمْ إِذَا هُمْ
يَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا بَغَيْتُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ
مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ
فَنُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ○

٢٤- إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ
مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ
حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا
وَاذْيَبْتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَا
أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ بُدِّلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ
أَنبَاءٌ آمُرْنَا لَيُعَذَّبَنَّهُمْ
بِفَعْلَانِهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ

1410 All the great inventions and discoveries on which man prides himself are the fruit of that genius and talent which God has freely given of His grace. But the spirit of man remains petty, as is illustrated by the parable from the sea. How the heart of man rejoices when the ship goes smoothly with favourable winds! How in adversity it turns, in terror and helplessness, to God, and makes vows for deliverance! and how those vows are disregarded as soon as the danger is past! Cf. vi. 63.

1411. In our insolence and pride we do not see how small and ephemeral is that part of us which is mortal. We shall see it at last when we appear before our Judge. In the meantime our ridiculous pretensions only hurt ourselves.

1412. Another beautiful Parable, explaining the nature of our present life. The rain comes down in drops and mingles with the earth. Through it, by God's matchless artistry, the womb of the earth is made fruitful. All kinds of good, useful, and beautiful grains, vegetables, and fruits are produced for men and animals. The earth is covered in its bravery of green and gold and all kinds of colours. Perhaps the "owner" takes all the credit to himself, and thinks that this will last eternally. A hailstorm or a blast, a frost or a volcanic eruption, comes and destroys it; or it may be, even normally, that the time of harvest comes, and the fields and orchards are stripped bare by some blight or disease. Where is the beauty and bravery of yesterday? All that is left is dust and ashes! What more can we get from this physical material life?

Only the day before !
Thus do We explain
The Signs in detail
For those who reflect.

تَعْنُ بِالْأَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ نَفْصِلُ الْآيَاتِ
لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ○

25. But God doth call
To the Home of Peace : ¹⁴¹³
He doth guide whom He pleaseth
To a Way that is straight.

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ
وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

26. To those who do right
Is a goodly (reward)—
Yea, more (than in measure) ! ¹⁴¹⁴
No darkness nor shame
Shall cover their faces ! ¹⁴¹⁵
They are Companions of the
Garden ;
They will abide therein
(For aye) !

وَالَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ
وَلَا يَرَوْنَ هُنَآٰ وَجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَلَا ذِلَّةٌ
أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ○

27. But those who have earned
Evil will have a reward
Of like evil : ¹⁴¹⁶ ignominy
Will cover their (faces) :
No defender will they have
From (the wrath of) God :
Their faces will be covered,
As it were, with pieces
From the depth of the darkness ¹⁴¹⁷
Of Night : they are Companions

وَالَّذِينَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ
بِسَيِّئَةٍ وَأَتْرَقَهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ
مَا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ
كَأَنَّمَا أُغْشِيَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ قِطْعًا مِّنَ
الْبَيْتِ مُظْلِمًا ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ

1413. In contrast with the ephemeral and uncertain pleasures of this material life, there is a higher life to which God is always calling. It is called the Home of Peace. For there is no fear, nor disappointment, nor sorrow there. And all are called, and those will be chosen who have sought, not material advantages, but the Good Pleasure of God. *Salām*, Peace, is from the same root as *Islām*, the Religion of Unity and Harmony.

1414. The reward of the righteous will be far more than in proportion to their merits. For they will have the supreme bliss of being near to God, and (in ḥuṭī language) "seeing His face".

1415. The face is the symbol of the Personality, the inner and real Self, which is the antithesis of the outer and ephemeral Self. It will be illuminated with God's Light, behind which is no shadow or darkness. All its old shortcomings will be blotted out, with their sense of shame, for there will be Perfection, as in God's sight.

1416. Note that the evil reward is for those who have "earned" evil, i.e., brought it on themselves by the deliberate choice of evil. Further, in the justice of God, they will be requited with evil similar to, and not greater in quantity or intensity, than the evil they had done,—unlike the good, who, in God's generosity, get a reward far greater than anything they have earned or could possibly earn.

1417. Night is the negation of Light and metaphorically of joy and felicity. The intensive is indicated by "the depth of the darkness of Night."

Of the Fire: they will
Abide therein (for aye) !

28. One Day shall We gather them
All together. Then shall We say
To those who joined gods (with Us):
"To your place ! ye and those
Ye joined as 'partners'."
We shall separate them,
And their "partners" shall say :
"It was not us
That ye worshipped ! ¹⁴¹⁸

29. "Enough is God for a witness
Between us and you : we
Certainly knew nothing
Of your worship of us ! " ¹⁴¹⁹

30. There will every soul prove
(The fruits of) the deeds
It sent before ¹⁴²⁰ : they will
Be brought back to God
Their Lord in truth,
And their invented falsehoods
Will leave them in the lurch. ¹⁴²¹

SECTION 4.

31. Say : "Who is it that
Sustains you (in life)
From the sky and from the
earth ? ¹⁴²²

هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ○

٢٨- وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ
لِلَّذِينَ
أَشْرَكُوا مِمَّا كُفِّرْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَشُرَكَاؤُكُمْ
فَزَلَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ وَقَالَ شُرَكَاؤُهُمْ
مَا كُنْتُمْ إِلَّا أَنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ○

٢٩- فَكُفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ
إِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغْفِيلِينَ ○

٣٠- هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُوا كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مِمَّا أَسْلَفَتْ وَ
رُدُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقُّ
وَصَلَ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ○

٣١- قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَ
الْأَرْضِ

1418. The false gods are not real : they are only the figments of the imaginations of those who indulged in the false worship. But the prophets or great or good men whose names were vainly taken in competition with the name of God, and the personified Ideas or Idols treated in the same way would themselves protest against their names being used in that way, and show that the worship was paid not to them, but to the ignorance or superstition or selfish lusts of the false worshippers.

1419. See last note. They did not even know that they were being falsely worshipped in that way.

1420. Cf. ii. 95, where the verb used is *qaddama*. The verb *aslaḥa*, used here, is nearly synonymous.

1421. Instead of their false ideas helping them, they will desert them and leave them in the lurch. Cf. vi. 24.

1422. Sustenance may be understood in the sense of all the provision necessary for maintaining physical life as well as mental and spiritual development and well-being. Examples of the former are light and rain from heaven and the produce of the earth and facilities of movement on land and sea and in air. Examples of the latter are the moral and spiritual influences that come from our fellow-men, and from the great Teachers and Prophets.

Or who is it that
Has power over hearing ¹⁴²³
And sight? And who
Is it that brings out
The living from the dead
And the dead from the living? ¹⁴²⁴
And who is it that
Rules and regulates all affairs? ¹⁴²⁵
They will soon say, "God".
Say, "Will ye not then
Show piety (to Him)?"

أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ
وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ
وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ
وَمَنْ يُدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ
فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ
فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

32. Such is God, your Cherisher
And Sustainer in truth :
Apart from Truth,
What (remains) but error? ¹⁴²⁶
How then are ye turned away?

۳۲- فَذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ
فَمَاذَا بَعَدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلَالُ
فَأَنَّى تُصْرَفُونَ

33. Thus is the Word
Of thy Lord proved true ¹⁴²⁷
Against those who rebel:
Verily they will not believe.

۳۳- كَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

34. Say: "Of your 'partners', ¹⁴²⁸
Can any originate creation
And repeat it?" Say:
"It is God Who originates
Creation and repeats it:
Then how are ye deluded
Away (from the truth)?"

۳۴- قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شَرِكَا يُبْدَأُ
الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ
قُلْ اللَّهُ يُبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ
ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ

1423. Just two of our ordinary faculties, hearing and sight, are mentioned, as examples of the rest. All the gifts of God, physical and spiritual, are enjoyed and incorporated by us by means of the faculties and capacities with which He has endowed us.

1424. Cf. iii. 27 and n. 371; vi. 95 and n. 920; and xxx. 19.

1425. This is the general summing up of the argument. The government of the whole Creation and its maintenance and sustenance is in the hands of God. How futile then would it be to neglect His true worship and go after false gods?

1426. The wonderful handiwork and wisdom of God having been referred to, as the real Truth, as against the false worship and false gods that men set up, it follows that to disregard the Truth must lead us into woeful wrong, not only in our beliefs but in our conduct. We shall err and stray and be lost. How then can we turn away from the Truth?

1427. Disobedience to God brings its own terrible consequences on ourselves. The Law, the Word, the Decree, of God must be fulfilled. If we go to false gods, our Faith will be dimmed, and then extinguished. Our spiritual faculties will be dead.

1428. The argument is now turned in another direction. The false gods can neither create out of nothing nor sustain the creative energy which maintains the world. Nor can they give any guidance which can be of use for the future destiny of mankind: on the contrary they themselves (assuming they were men who were deified) stand in need of such guidance. Why then follow vain fancies, instead of going to the source of all knowledge, truth, and guidance, and worship, serve, and obey the One True God?

35. Say: "Of your 'partners'
Is there any that
Can give any guidance
Towards Truth?" Say: "It is God
Who gives guidance
Towards Truth. Is then He
Who gives guidance to Truth
More worthy to be followed,
Or he who finds not guidance
(Himself) unless he is guided?
What then is the matter
With you? How judge ye?"

36. But most of them follow
Nothing but fancy: truly
Fancy can be of no avail
Against Truth. Verily God
Is well aware of all
What they do.

37. This Qur'an is not such
As can be produced
By other than God;
On the contrary it is
A confirmation of (revelations)
That went before it,
And a fuller explanation¹⁴²⁹
Of the Book—wherein
There is no doubt—
From the Lord of the Worlds.

38. Or do they say,
"He forged it?"
Say: "Bring then
A Sūra like unto it,
Or call (to your aid)
Any one you can,
Besides God, if it be
Ye speak the truth!"¹⁴³⁰

٣٥- قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شَرِكَاكُمْ مَنْ
يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ
أَمَّنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ
أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُنْزِلَ أَمَّنْ لَا يَهْدِي
إِلَّا أَنْ يَهْدِيَ
فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ○

٣٦- وَمَا يَتَّبِعُهُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا
إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ○

٣٧- وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ
أَنْ يُفْتَرَى مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
وَتَفْصِيلُ الْكِتَابِ
لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ○

٣٨- أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ
قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ
وَأَدْعُوا مَنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ○

1429. *The Book*: Cf. iii. 23 and n. 366. God's revelation throughout the ages is one. The Qur'an confirms, completes, and further explains the one true revelation, which has been sent by the One True God in all ages.

1430. Cf. ii. 23 and n. 42.

39. Nay, they charge with falsehood
That whose knowledge they
Cannot compass, even before
The elucidation thereof ¹⁴³¹
Hath reached them: thus
Did those before them
Make charges of falsehood:
But see what was the end
Of those who did wrong! ¹⁴³²

۴۹- بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فُتُوًا بِعِلْمِهِ
وَلَتَأْيَأَتُهُمْ تَأْوِيلُهَا
كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝

40. Of them there are some
Who believe therein,
And some who do not:
And thy Lord knoweth best
Those who are out for mischief.

۴۰- وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ
وَكَرُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ ۝

C. 101.—Men but wrong their own souls in shutting out
(x. 41-70.) The Truth of God. To Him will be
Their return. They have been warned
At all times and among all peoples
By chosen Apostles of God, whom they
Have flouted. The Day will come
When they will see the majesty, the glory,
The goodness, and the justice of God.
But they invent fancies and falsehoods.
Let not their blasphemies and falsehoods
Grieve the men of God: for falsehoods
And false ones will never prosper.

SECTION 5.

41. If they charge thee
With falsehood, say:
"My work to me,
And yours to you!" ¹⁴³³

۴۱- وَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ
لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ

1431. *Taawil*: elucidation, explanation, final fulfilment, Cf. vii. 53. The Message of God not only gives us rules for our every-day conduct, but speaks of high matters of mystic significance, which require elucidation in three ways: (1) by instruction from Teachers of great spiritual experience, (2) by experience from the actual facts of life, and (3) by the final fulfilment of the hopes and warnings which we now take on trust through our Faith. The Unbelievers reject God's Message simply because they cannot understand it and without giving it even a chance of elucidation in any of these ways.

1432. Wrong-doers always came to grief ultimately. The true course of history shows it from a broad standpoint. But they are so headstrong that they prejudice issues in their ignorance before they are decided.

1433. When the man of God is rejected and charged with falsehood, he does not give up his work, but continues to teach and preach his Message. He can well say to those who interfere with him: "Mind your own business: supposing your charge against me is true, you incur no responsibility: I have to answer for it before God: and if I do my duty and deliver my Message, your rejection does not make me liable for your wrong-doing: you will have to answer before God."

Ye are free from responsibility
For what I do, and I
For what ye do !"

42. Among them are some who
(Pretend to) listen to thee :
But canst thou make the deaf
To hear,—when moreover
They are without
understanding ? ¹⁴³⁴

43. And among them are some
Who look at thee :
But canst thou guide
The blind,—even though
They cannot see ?

44. Verily God will not deal
Unjustly with man in aught :
It is man that wrongs
His own soul. ¹⁴³⁵

45. One day He will
Gather them together :
(It will be) as if
They had tarried ¹⁴³⁶
But an hour of a day :
They will recognise each other : ¹⁴³⁷
Assuredly those will be lost
Who denied the meeting
With God and refused
To receive true guidance.

46. Whether We show thee
(Realised in thy lifetime)
Some part of what We
Promise them,—or We

أَنْتُمْ بَرَاءُونَ مِنْهَا أَعْمَلُ
وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ وَمِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ○

٣٢- وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَنْتَوِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ
أَفَأَنْتَ تَهْتِمُ بِهِمْ
وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ○

٣٣- وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْكَ
أَفَأَنْتَ تَهْدِي الْعُمْيَ
وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَبْصُرُونَ ○

٣٤- إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا
وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ○

٣٥- وَنَوْمُهُ يَمَشُرُهُمْ كَأَن لَّمْ يَلْبَثُوا
إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِنَ النَّهَارِ
يَتَعَارَفُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ
فَذُخِرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ
وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ○

٣٦- وَإِنَّا لَنَرِيكَ
بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ

1434. Cf. vi. 25, 36, 39 and notes. Hypocrites go to hear and see some great Teacher, but they get no profit out of it because they are not sincerely seeking the truth. They are like the blind, or the deaf, or the imbeciles. It is impossible to guide them, because they have not the will to be guided.

1435. God cannot be blamed for man's evil, nor will He deal unjustly with man. He has given him faculties and means of guidance. If man goes wrong, it is because he wrongs himself.

1436. In eternity our life on this earth will look as if it had been just a little part of our little day, and so also will appear any interval between our death and the call to judgment.

1437. We shall retain some perception of our mutual relations on earth, so that the righteous judgment which will be pronounced will be intelligible to us, and we shall be convinced of its righteousness.

Take thy soul (to Our Mercy)
(Before that),—in any case,
To Us is their return :
Ultimately God is witness ¹⁴³³
To all that they do.

تَوَكَّلْنَاكَ وَالْإِنَّمَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ
ثُمَّ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ
عَلَى مَا يَفْعَلُونَ ○

47. ¹⁴³⁸ To every people (was sent)
An Apostle: when their Apostle ¹⁴³⁹
Comes (before them), the matter
Will be judged between them
With justice, and they
Will not be wronged.

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولٌ
فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَهُمْ لَا يظْلَمُونَ ○

48. They say : " When
Will this promise
Come to pass,—
If ye speak the truth ? "

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ○

49. Say: " I have no power ¹⁴⁴⁰
Over any harm or profit
To myself except as God
Willeth. To every People ¹⁴⁴¹
Is a term appointed:
When their term is reached,
Not an hour can they cause
Delay, nor (an hour) can they
Advance (in anticipation)."

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا
إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ
لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ
إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً
وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِرُونَ ○

1438. The Apostle is assured that the end of evil is evil, just as the end of good is good. Whether this result is made plain before his very eyes in his own lifetime or afterwards, makes no difference. The wicked should not rejoice if they are given rope and seem to have the upper hand for a time, nor should the righteous lose heart: for God's promise is sure, and must come to pass. And in any case, the scales can only be partially, if at all, adjusted in this life. There is the final and complete adjustment on the Day of Judgment. God is All-Knowing, and all truth will be before Him.

1439. Every people or generation or nation had its Message or Messenger: God revealed Himself to it in some way or another. If that Messenger was ignored or rejected, or his Message was twisted or misused, the Day of Reckoning will come, when perfect justice will be done and the whole Truth revealed. The Unbelievers mockingly say: "If that is true, pray tell us when that Day will come!" The answer of the Messenger is: "It will come in good time: no one can either hasten or retard it. If you want me then to save you or if you fear that I shall harm you for your treatment of me, know that this matter is in the hands of God alone, Who will do perfect justice. Even in regard to myself, any harm or good that befalls me is by the command and in the power of God."

1440. Cf. vii. 188.

1441. This repeats vii. 34, but the significance is different in the two contexts. Here the reply is to the Unbelievers' mocking incredulity (see n. 1439) as to whether there is such a thing as a Hereafter: they suggest to the man of God that if his claim of inspiration from God is true, he should get them punished at once for rejecting him. In vii. 34 the reference is to the punishment of iniquity as described in vii. 33: sin is not necessarily punished at once: every People or generation gets a chance; when their term is fulfilled, the final adjustment is made.

50. Say: "Do ye see,—
If His punishment should come
To you by night or by day,—¹⁴⁴²
What portion of it
Would the Sinners
Wish to hasten?"

51. "Would ye then believe in it
At last, when it actually cometh
To pass? (It will then be said:)
'Ah! now? and ye wanted
(Aforetime) to hasten it on!'"

52. "At length will be said
To the wrong-doers: 'Taste ye
The enduring punishment!'¹⁴⁴³
Ye get but the recompense
Of what ye earned!'"

53. They seek to be informed
Of thee: "Is that true?"
Say: "Aye! by my Lord!
It is the very truth!
And ye cannot frustrate it!"

SECTION 6.

54. Every soul that hath sinned,
If it possessed all
That is on earth,
Would fain give it in ransom: ¹⁴⁴⁴

هـ- قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَذَابَ
بَيِّنَاتًا أَوْ نَهَارًا
مَاذَا يُسْتَغِيلُونَ

هـ- أَلَمْ تَرَ إِذَا مَا وَقَعَتْ أَمْثَلُهُمْ
أَلَّنْ وَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ

هـ- ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا
عَذَابَ الْعَذَابِ
هَلْ يَنْجُونَ إِلَّا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ

هـ- وَكَسَبْتُمْ بُرْهَانَ أَحَقِّ هُوَ
قُلْ إِنْ أَرَادَيْتُمْ إِلَّا لِحَقِّ
وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُخْجِرِينَ

هـ- وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ
مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَا فُتِدَتْ بِهِ

1442. The mockery of Unbelievers will be turned into panic when the wrath of God descends on them. It may do so suddenly, by night or by day, when they least expect it. Will they then say of any bit of it: "Let it be hastened?"

1443. This will be the final doom, and they will themselves have brought it on themselves! The psychology of the Unbelievers is here analysed and exposed. This particular argument begins at x. 47 and ends at x. 53. It begins with the general statement that every People has had due warning and explanation by means of an Apostle specially sent to them; that Apostle will be a relevant witness at the final Judgment, when the matter will be judged in perfect equity. Then follows a dialogue. The Unbelievers mock and say, "Why not bring on the Punishment now?" The reply to the Unbelievers is, "It will come in God's good time". The Believers are told to watch and see how the sinners would take it if the Punishment were to come at once. Would they not think it too sudden? When it actually comes, their panic will be indescribable. "Is that true?" say the Unbelievers. "It is the very truth," is the answer, "and nothing can ward it off."

1444. Cf. iii. 91.

They would declare (their)
repentance ¹⁴⁴⁵
When they see the Penalty:
But the judgment between them
Will be with justice,
And no wrong will be done
Unto them.

وَأَسْرُوا الذَّامَّةَ لِنَارِ أَوْ الْعَذَابِ
وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ
وَهُمْ لَا يظلمُونَ ○

55. Is it not (the case) that to God
Belongeth whatever is
In the heavens and on earth?
Is it not (the case) that
God's promise is assuredly true?
Yet most of them understand not.

هـ- أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
أَلَا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ○

56. It is He who giveth life
And who taketh it,
And to Him shall ye
All be brought back.

هـ- هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ
وَالِيَهُ تُرْجَعُونَ ○

57. Oh mankind! there hath come
To you a direction from your Lord
And a healing for the (diseases) ¹⁴⁴⁶
In your hearts,—and for those
Who believe, a Guidance
And a Mercy.

هـ- يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ
مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ
وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ○

58. Say: "In the Bounty of God
And in His Mercy,—in that
Let them rejoice": that is better
Than the (wealth) they hoard.

هـ- قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ
فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ○

59. Say: "See ye what things ¹⁴⁴⁷
God hath sent down

هـ- قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ

1445. *Declare their repentance*: the verb in the original is *asarrū*, which may mean either "declare" or "reveal" or else "conceal" or "hide". The classical Commentators are divided as to the meaning to be adopted here. If the first, which I prefer, the sense would be: "When the Penalty stares the sinners in the face, they would give anything to escape it, and they would even openly declare their repentance, which would be a source of shame and ignominy to them." If the latter meaning be taken, the sense would be: "They would give anything to escape the Penalty; but the hardest thing of all for them is frankly to confess and repent, and so they conceal their sense of shame and ignominy."

1446. Those who do wrong have a disease in their hearts, which will cause their spiritual death. God in His Mercy declares His Will to them, which should direct their lives and provide a healing for their spiritual disease. If they accept Faith, the remedy acts; they find themselves in right guidance and receive God's forgiveness and mercy. Surely those are far better gifts than material advantages, wealth, or possessions.

1447. "Sustenance" is to be taken in both the literal and the metaphorical sense. In the literal sense, what fine and varied things God has provided for us on land and in sea and air, in the vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms? Yet narrow minds put artificial barriers against their use. In the metaphorical sense, what enchanting fields of knowledge and spiritual endeavour are provided in our individual and social lives? And who is to say that some are lawful and others forbidden? Supposing they were so in special circumstances, it is not right to attribute artificial restrictions of that kind to God and falsely erect religious sanctions against them.

For your sustenance ? Yet ye
Hold forbidden some things
Thereof and (some things) lawful."
Say : " Hath God indeed
Permitted you, or do ye invent
(Things) to attribute to God ? "

لَكُمْ مِنْ زَرْقٍ فَمَعْلُومٌ مِنْهُ حَرَامًا وَ
حَلَالًا قُلْ اللَّهُ أَوْنَ لَكُمْ
أَمْرٌ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَقْتَرُونَ ○

60. And what think those
Who invent lies against God
Of the Day of Judgment ? ¹⁴⁴⁸
Verily God is full of Bounty
To mankind, but most
Of them are ungrateful. ¹⁴⁴⁹

وَمَا ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ
الْكَذِبَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ
عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ○

SECTION 7.

61. **E**n whatever business thou
Mayest be, and whatever portion
Thou mayest be reciting
From the Qurān,—and whatever
Deed ye (mankind) may be doing,—
We are Witnesses thereof
When ye are deeply engrossed
Therein. Nor is hidden
From thy Lord (so much as)
The weight of an atom
On the earth or in heaven.
And not the least
And not the greatest
Of these things but are recorded
In a clear Record. ¹⁴⁵⁰

وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأٍ
وَمَا تَكُلُوا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْآنٍ
وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا لَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ
شُهُودٌ إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ
وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالٍ ذَرَّةٍ
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ
وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ
إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ○

62. Behold! verily on the friends
Of God there is no fear, ¹⁴⁵¹

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ

¹⁴⁴⁸. People who lie in Religion or invent false gods, or false worship,—have they any idea of the Day of Judgment, when they will be called to account, and will have to answer for their deeds ?

¹⁴⁴⁹. God is most kind, and gracious, and generous with His gifts of all kinds, material and spiritual. But men do not understand, and are ungrateful in forgetting the Giver of all and setting up false objects of worship and false standards of pride.

¹⁴⁵⁰. There is nothing that men can do but God is a witness to it. We may be deeply engrossed in some particular thing and for the time being be quite unconscious of other things. But God's knowledge not only comprehends all things, but has all things actively before it. Nothing is hidden from Him. And His knowledge has another quality which human knowledge has not. Human knowledge is subject to time, and is obliterated by time. God's knowledge is like a Record and endures for ever. And His Record has a further quality which human records have not. The most permanent human record may be quite intelligible to those who make it but may be ambiguous to others and may become unintelligible with the progress of time, as happens almost invariably to the most enduring inscriptions from very ancient times : but in God's " Record " or knowledge there is no ambiguity, for it is independent of time, or place, or circumstance. This is the force of *Mubīn* here.

¹⁴⁵¹. God's all-embracing knowledge and constant watchful care over all His creatures, may be a source of fear to sinners, but there is no fear for those whom He honours with His love and friendship,—neither in this world nor in the world to come.

Nor shall they grieve;

63. Those who believe
And (constantly) guard
Against evil;—

64. For them are Glad Tidings,
In the life of the Present
And in the Hereafter:
No change can there be
In the Words of God.
This is indeed
The supreme Felicity.

65. Let not their speech ¹⁴⁵²
Grieve thee: for all power
And honour belong to God:
It is He Who heareth
And knoweth (all things).

66. Behold! verily to God
Belong all creatures,
In the heavens and on earth.
What do they follow
Who worship as His "partners"
Other than God? They follow
Nothing but fancy, and
They do nothing but lie. ¹⁴⁵³

67. He it is that hath
Made you the Night
That ye may rest therein,
And the Day to make
Things visible (to you). ¹⁴⁵⁴
Verily in this are Signs
For those who listen
(To His Message).

وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ۝

٦٣- الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ۝

٦٤- لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۚ

لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ

ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْقَوْرُ الْعَظِيمُ ۝

٦٥- وَلَا يَحْزَنكَ قَوْلُهُمْ

إِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ۚ

هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ۝

٦٦- أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مِنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمِنْ

فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَشْعُرُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ

مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ ۚ إِنَّ يَكْفُرُونَ إِلَّا

الظَّنَّ ۚ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ۝

٦٧- هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ

لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ۚ

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ

لِقَوْمٍ يُسْمِعُونَ ۝

1452. Sometimes the words of the unrighteous or their revilings hurt or grieve the righteous man, but there is no occasion for either anger or sorrow: they have no power and they can do no real dishonour, for all power and honour are from God.

1453. All creatures are subject to God. If, therefore, any false worship is set up, the false gods—so-called "partners"—are merely creatures of imagination or false inventions.

1454. Our physical life—and our higher life in so far as it is linked with the physical—is sustained by the alternation of rest and activity, and the fit environment for this alternation is the succession of Nights and Days in our physical world. The Day makes the things "visible to us"—a beautiful symbol, not only of the physical work for which we go about by day, but of the higher activities which are fitly associated with seeing, perception, and enquiry. Intuition (insight) is a little out of that circle, because that may come by night, when our other faculties are resting.

68. They say, "God hath begotten
A son!"—Glory be to Him!
He is Self-Sufficient! His
Are all things in the heavens
And on earth! No warrant
Have ye for this! Say ye
About God what ye know not?

69. Say: "Those who invent
A lie against God
Will never prosper." 1455

70. A little enjoyment
In this world!—
And then, to Us
Will be their return.
Then shall We make them
Taste the severest Penalty
For their blasphemies.

٦٨ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَنَهُ
هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي
الْاَرْضِ اِنْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ سُلٰطٰنٍ بِهٰذَا
اَتَكْفُرُوْنَ عَلَىٰ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ
٦٩ قُلْ لِّىَ الَّذِيْنَ يَفْكُرُوْنَ عَلَىٰ اللّٰهِ
الْكُذِبُ لَا يُفْلِحُوْنَ
٧٠ مَتَاعٌ فِى الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ اِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ
ثُمَّ نُنْفِىْهُمْ الْعَذَابَ الشَّدِيْدَ
بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْفُرُوْنَ

C. 102.—God works in His world—in mercy
(x. 71-92.) For His servants, and in just punishment
For those who do wrong. Thus was it
In Noah's story, for he worked unselfishly
For his people, though rejected of them.
So was it with Moses : he preached
To Pharaoh and the Egyptians, but most
Of them preferred falsehood and pride
To the Truth of God, and perished. Even
Pharaoh's confession of God at the last
Was too late, as his life had been spent
In luxury, pride, and oppression.

SECTION 8.

71. Relate to them the story 1456
Of Noah. Behold! he said
To his People: "Oh my People,
If it be hard on your (mind)

اَوَاثِلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَا نُوحٍ اِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖ
يَقُوْمُ اِنْ كَانَ كِبُرٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

1455. In Quranic language "prosperity" refers both to our every-day life and to the higher life within us,—to the Present and the Future,—health and strength, opportunities and resources, a spirit of contentment, and the power of influencing others. Here there seems to be an extra touch of meaning. A liar not only deprives himself of prosperity in all senses, but his "lie" itself against God will not succeed : it will and must be found out.

1456. The reference to Noah's story here is only incidental, to illustrate a special point. The fuller story will be found in xi. 25-48, and in many other passages, e.g., vii. 59-64, xxiii. 23-32, xxvi. 105-122, and xxxvii. 75-82. At each place there is a special point in the context. The special point here is that Noah's very life and preaching among his wicked people was a cause of offence to them. But he feared nothing, trusted in God, delivered his message, and was saved from the Flood.

That I should stay (with you)
And commemorate the Signs
Of God,—yet I put
My trust in God.
Get ye then an agreement
About your plan and among
Your Partners, so your plan ¹⁴⁵⁷
Be not to you dark and dubious.
Then pass your sentence on me,
And give me no respite.

72. "But if ye turn back, (consider):
No reward have I asked ¹⁴⁵⁶
Of you: my reward is only
Due from God, and I
Have been commanded to be
Of those who submit
To God's Will (in Islām)."

73. They rejected him,
But We delivered him,
And those with him,
In the Ark, and We made
Them inherit (the earth),
While We overwhelmed
In the Flood those
Who rejected Our Signs. ¹⁴⁵⁸
Then see what was the end
Of those who were warned
(But heeded not)!

74. Then after him We sent
(Many) apostles to their Peoples:
They brought them Clear Signs,
But they would not believe
What they had already rejected ¹⁴⁶⁰

فَقَامُوا وَكَذَّابِينَ يَاقُوتَ اللَّهِ
فَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ
فَأَجْمِعُوا أَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَاءَكُمْ
ثُمَّ لَا يَكُنْ أَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً
ثُمَّ اقْضُوا إِلَيَّ وَلَا تُنظِرُونِ ○

٤٢- فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ
إِنْ أَجَبْتُمْ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ
وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ○

٤٣- فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ
وَمَنْ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِ
وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ خُلَفَاءَ
وَآخَرُونَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِالْآيَاتِ
فَالنَّظَرَ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ○

٤٤- ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ
فِيَاءُ وَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا بِهِ مِنْ

1457. Firm in his sense of Truth from God, Noah plainly told his people to condemn him to death if they liked, openly and in concert, so that he should at least know who would listen to his Message and who would not. He wanted them to be frank and direct, for he feared nothing.

1458. The man of God preaches for the good of his people. But he claims no reward for them, but on the contrary is reviled, persecuted, banished, and often slain.

1459. Cf. vii. 64.

1460. I understand the meaning to be that there is a sort of spiritual influence descending from generation to generation, among the Unbelievers as among the men of Faith. In history we find the same spiritual problems in many ages,—denial of God's grace, defiance of God's law, rejection of God's Message. These influences cause the hearts of the contumacious to be sealed and impervious to the Truth. Cf. ii. 7 and notes. What they do is to prejudice the issues even before the Prophet explains them.

Beforehand. Thus do We seal
The hearts of the transgressors.

75. ~~Then~~ After them sent We
Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh ¹⁴⁶¹
And his chiefs with Our Signs.
But they were arrogant:
They were a people in sin.

76. When the Truth did come
To them from Us, they said:
"This is evident sorcery!"

77. Said Moses: "Say ye (this)
About the Truth when
It hath (actually) reached you?
Is sorcery (like) this?
But sorcerers will not prosper." ¹⁴⁶²

78. They said: "Hast thou
Come to us to turn us
Away from the ways
We found our fathers following,—
In order that thou and thy brother
May have greatness in the land? ¹⁴⁶³
But not we shall believe in you!"

79. Said Pharaoh: "Bring me
Every sorcerer well versed."

80. When the sorcerers came,
Moses said to them:
"Throw ye what ye (wish)
To throw!"

قَبْلُ كَذَلِكَ نَطْبَعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ○

٧٥- ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِم مُوسَى وَ
هَارُونَ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ بِآيَاتِنَا
فَأَسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُجْرِمِينَ ○

٧٦- فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا
قَالُوا إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ○

٧٧- قَالَ مُوسَى أَتَقُولُونَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَكُمْ
أَسِحْرٌ هَذَا
وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُونَ ○

٧٨- قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَعْبُدَكَ وَأَنتَ فَطَرْتَنَا
إِنَّا نَآءٌ وَتَكُونُ لَكُمُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي
الْأَرْضِ
وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمُ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ○

٧٩- وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ أَتُؤْتُونِي بِحُلٍّ سِحْرِ عَلَيْهِمُ

٨٠- فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّاحِرُونَ قَالُوا لَهُمْ مُوسَى
الْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُقْتُونَ ○

1461. The story of Moses, Aaron, and Pharaoh is fully told in vii. 103-137, and there are references to it in many places in the Qurān. The incidental reference here is to illustrate a special point, *viz.*, that the wicked are arrogant and bound up in their sin, and prefer deception to Truth: they do not hesitate to charge the men of God, who work unselfishly for them, with mean motives, such as would actuate them in similar circumstances!

1462. Sorcery is the very opposite of Truth,—being deception or plausible shows by the powers of evil. But these cannot succeed or last permanently, and Truth must ultimately prevail.

1463. Notice how they attribute evil motives to the men of God, motives of ambition and lust of power, which the men of God had been sent expressly to put down. The same device was used against Muṣṭafā.

81. When they had had their throw,¹⁴⁶⁴
Moses said: "What ye
Have brought is sorcery :
God will surely make it
Of no effect : for God
Prospereth not the work
Of those who make mischief.

فَلَمَّا ألقَوْا قَال مُوسَى
مَا جِئْتُمْ بِهِ السِّحْرُ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَابِقُ الْعَمَلِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ○

82. " And God by His Words¹⁴⁶⁵
Doth prove and establish
His Truth, however much
The Sinners may hate it ! "

۞ وَيُحِقُّ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ
وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْجَاهِلُونَ ○

SECTION 9.

83. But none believed in Moses
Except some children of his
People,¹⁴⁶⁶
Because of the fear of Pharaoh
And his chiefs, lest they
Should persecute them : and
Pharaoh was mighty on the earth
And one who transgressed all
bounds.

۞ فَمَا آمَنَ لِمُوسَى إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِنْ
قَوْمِهِ عَلَى خَوْفٍ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَكُلِّ
أَنْ يَفْتِنَهُمْ ○ وَإِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ
فِي الْأَرْضِ ○ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِنِ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ○

84. Moses said : " Oh my People !
If ye do (really) believe
In God, then in Him
Put your trust if ye
Submit (your will to His). "

۞ وَقَالَ مُوسَى يُقُولُونَ كُنْتُمْ
أَمْثَلُكُمْ ○ بِاللهِ فَعَلَيْكُمْ
تَوَكَّلُوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُسْلِمِينَ ○

85. They said : " In God
Do we put our trust.

۞ فَقَالُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ○

1464. When they threw their rods, the rods became snakes by a trick of sorcery, but Moses's miracles were greater than any tricks of sorcery, and had real Truth behind them.

1465. God's Words or Commands have real power, while sorcerers' tricks only seem wonderful by deceiving the eye.

1466. The pronoun "his" in "his People" is taken by some Commentators to refer to Pharaoh. The majority of Pharaoh's people refused to believe at the time, but the sorcerers believed (vii. 120), and so did Pharaoh's wife (lxvi. 11), and ultimately Pharaoh himself, though too late (x. 90). If we took "his" to refer to Moses, it would mean that the Israelites were hard-hearted and grumbled (vii. 129) even when they were being delivered from Egypt, and only a few of them had any real faith in God's providence and the working of His Law, and they feared Pharaoh even more than they feared God.

Our Lord ! make us not
A trial for those ¹⁴⁶⁷
Who practise oppression ;

86. " And deliver us by Thy Mercy
From those who reject (Thee). "

87. ~~We~~ We inspired Moses and his
brother
With this Message : " Provide ¹⁴⁶⁸
Dwellings for your People
In Egypt, make your dwellings
Into places of worship,
And establish regular prayers :
And give Glad Tidings
To those who believe ! "

88. Moses prayed : " Our Lord !
Thou hast indeed bestowed
On Pharaoh and his Chiefs
Splendour and wealth in the life ¹⁴⁶⁹
Of the Present, and so,
Our Lord, they mislead (men)
From Thy Path. Deface,
Our Lord, the features of their
wealth, ¹⁴⁷⁰
And send hardness to their hearts,
So they will not believe

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ٥

٨٦- وَاجْعَلْنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ٥

٨٧- وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ
أَنْ تَبْنُوا الْقَوْمَ مَكَامًا يَذْكُرُونَ ۖ وَاجْعَلُوا
بُيُوتَكُمْ مَذَابِحَ
وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَابَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ٥

٨٨- وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ آتَيْتَ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَآئِهِ زِينَةً وَأَمْوَالًا فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا
رَبَّنَا لِيُضِلُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِكَ
رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ عَلَىٰ أَمْوَالِهِمْ
وَاشْدُدْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا

1467. A trial for those who practise oppression : the various meanings of *Fitnat* have been explained in n. 1198 to viii. 25. The prayer is that the righteous people, being weak, should be saved from being used as objects of oppression or punishment at the hands of powerful enemies. Weakness tempts Power to practise oppression, and is thus an occasion of trial for the oppressors.

1468. This instruction, we may suppose, was given when the sorcerers were brought to confusion, and some of the Egyptians believed. Moses was for a little while to remain in Egypt, so that his Message should have time to work, before the Israelites were led out of Egypt. They were to make their houses into places of prayer (*Qibla*), as Pharaoh would not probably allow them to set up public places of prayer, and they were now to be only sojourners in Egypt. The *Qibla* was to be symbolical of their later wanderings in Arabia, and the still later restoration of God's pure worship at the Ka'ba under Muḥaffā. These were the glad tidings (the Gospel) of Islam, which was preached under Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, and completed under Muḥammad.

1469. Moses's prayer, in which Aaron joined, for he was always with him, may be paraphrased thus : " Oh God ! we understand that the glitter and the wealth of the Egyptians are not to be envied. They are but the ephemeral goods of this life. They are a disadvantage, in that in their pride of possessions the Egyptians mislead themselves and others. Let their pride be their undoing ! Turn their wealth into bitterness and their hearts into hardness, for they reject Thee, and they will not believe until they actually see the Punishment of their sins ! "

1470. A terrible curse ! Let their wealth and splendour become so defaced in their features, that instead of being objects of desire, they become objects of loathing ! The heart is the seat of affections and joy : let it be so hardened by their unbelief that it becomes the seat of hatred and grief ! It is when they see the Penalty that they will believe !

Until they see
The grievous Penalty."

89. God said : " Accepted is
Your prayer (oh Moses and Aaron) !
So stand ye straight,
And follow not the path
Of those who know not." 1471

90. ~~We~~ e took the Children
Of Israel across the sea :
Pharaoh and his hosts followed them
In insolence and spite. 1472
At length, when overwhelmed
With the flood, he said :
" I believe there is no god
Except Him Whom the Children
Of Israel believe in : 1473
I am of those who submit
(To God in Islam)."

91. (It was said to him :)
" Ah now !—But a little while
Before, wast thou in rebellion !—
And thou didst mischief (and
violence) !

92. " This day shall We save thee
In thy body, that thou
Mayest be a Sign to those
Who come after thee !
But verily, many among mankind
Are heedless of Our Signs ! "

حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ

٨٩- قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَتْ دَعْوَتُكُمَا فَاسْتَقِيمَا
وَلَا تَتَّبِعِينَ سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

٩٠- وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ الْبَحْرَ
فَاتَّبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَغْيًا وَعَدُوًّا
حَتَّى إِذَا أَذْرَكَهُ الْعَرَقُ
قَالَ آمَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
الَّذِي آمَنْتُ بِهِ بَنُو إِسْرَءِيلَ
وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

٩١- أَلَمْ تَكُنْ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلَ
وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

٩٢- فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِمَدْنِكَ لِنَبْلُوًا
لِمَنْ خَلَقْنَا آيَةً ۚ وَإِنْ كَثِيرٌ مِّنَ
النَّاسِ عَنِ آيَاتِنَا لَغَفْلُونَ

C. 103.- God's purpose of Mercy and Forgiveness
(x. 93-109.) Was shown in the mission of Jonah, when
Nineveh was pardoned on repentance, and given
A new lease of life. We must

1471. Be not dazzled by their splendour, but stand out straight for Truth, for that is your salvation ! Addressed in form to Moses and Aaron, in substance it is addressed to the Israelites.

1472. Notice the swiftness of the action in the narrative. The execution of poetic justice could not have been described in fewer words.

1473. That is, in the One True God. This was death-bed repentance, and even so it was forced by the terror of the catastrophe. So it was not accepted (cf. iv. 18) in its entirety. Only this concession was made, that the body was saved from the sea, and presumably, according to Egyptian custom, it was embalmed and the mummy was given due rites of the dead. But the story commemorated for ever God's working, in mercy for His people, and in just punishment of oppressors.

Be patient and strive with constancy and perseverance,
 For all suffering and sorrow as well as
 All bounties procected from God, Whose plan
 Is righteous and for the good of His creatures.

SECTION 10.

93. ~~We~~ ¹⁴⁷⁴ settled the Children
 Of Israel in a beautiful
 Dwelling-place, and provided
 For them sustenance of the best :
 It was after knowledge had been
 Granted to them, that they
 Fell into schisms. Verily
 God will judge between them
 As to the schisms amongst them,
 On the Day of Judgment.
94. If thou wert in doubt
 As to what We have revealed
 Unto thee, then ask those
 Who have been reading
 The Book from before thee : ¹⁴⁷⁵
 The Truth hath indeed come
 To thee from thy Lord :
 So be in no wise
 Of those in doubt. ¹⁴⁷⁶
95. Nor be of those who reject
 The Signs of God,
 Or thou shalt be of those
 Who perish.
96. ~~Those~~ ¹⁴⁷⁷ against whom the Word
 Of thy Lord hath been verified

٩٣- وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَآءِيلَ مَبْوَآ
 صِدْقِي وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ
 فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا حَتَّى جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ
 إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ
 فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ○

٩٤- فَإِنْ كُنْتَ فِي شَكٍّ مِّمَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ
 فَسْأَلِ الَّذِينَ يُقْرَأُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ
 قَبْلِكَ
 لَقَدْ جَاءَكَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
 فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ ○

٩٥- وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بَآيَاتِ
 اللَّهِ فَتَكُونُونَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ○

٩٦- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ

1474. After many wanderings the Israelites were settled in the land of Canaan, described as "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. iii. 8). They had a prosperous land; and they were supplied with spiritual sustenance by men sent to deliver God's Message. They should have known better than to fall into disputes and schisms, but they did so. This was all the more inexcusable considering what bounties they had received from God. The schisms arose from selfish arrogance, and God will judge between them on the Day of Judgment.

1475. God's Truth is all one, and even in different forms men sincere in Religion recognise the oneness. So sincere Jews like 'Abdullāh ibn Salām, and sincere Christians like Waraqa or the Nestorian monk Bahīra, were ready to recognise the mission of Muḥammad Muṣṭafā. "The Book" in this connection is Revelation generally, including pre-Islamic revelations.

1476. Cf. iii. 60 and n. 60.

1477. God has given frequent warnings against Evil and want of Faith in all ages, through Signs and through inspiration,—the latter ("the Word") being even more direct and personal than the former. Those who did not heed the warning found to their cost that it was true, and they perished. Such contumacy in the rejection of Truth only yields when the actual penalty is in sight. Belief then is induced by irresistible facts: it is not efficacious as Faith, as was proved against Pharaoh. See x. 90 and n. 1473.

Would not believe—

97. Even if every Sign was brought
Unto them,—until they see
(For themselves) the Penalty
Grievous.

98. Why was there not
A single township (among those
We warned), which believed,—
So its Faith should have
Profited it,—except the People ¹⁴⁷⁸
Of Jonas? When they believed,
We removed from them
The Penalty of Ignominy
In the life of the Present,
And permitted them to enjoy
(Their life) for a while. ¹⁴⁷⁹

99. If it had been thy Lord's Will,
They would all have believed,—
All who are on earth!
Wilt thou then compel mankind,

لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

۹۷- وَلَوْ جَاءَهُمْ كُلُّ آيَةٍ
حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ۝

۹۸- فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ
أَمَنَتْ فَتَنْفَعَهَا لِبَنَاتِهَا (إِلَّا قَوْمَ
يُونُسَ ۚ
لَنَآ أَمْثَلُا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ۝

۹۹- وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَآمَنَ مَن فِي الْأَرْضِ
كُلُّهُمْ جُوعِيْعًا ۖ أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ

1478. God in His infinite Mercy points out the contumacy of Sin as a warning, and the exceptional case of Nineveh and its Prophet Jonas is alluded to. The story of Jonas is told in xxxvii. 139-148, which would be an appropriate place for further comments. Here it is sufficient to note that Nineveh was a very ancient town which is now no longer on the map. Its site is believed to be marked by the two mounds on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite the flourishing city of Mosul on the right bank, about 230 miles north-north-west of Bagdad. One of the mounds bears the name of "the Tomb of Nabi Yûnus." Archaeologists have not yet fully explored its antiquities. But it is clear that it was a very old Sumerian town, perhaps older than 3500 B.C. It became the capital of Assyria. The first Assyrian Empire under Shalmanesser I, about 1300 B.C., became the supreme power in Western Asia. Babylon, whose tributary Assyria had formerly been, now became tributary to Assyria. The second Assyrian Empire arose about 745 B.C., and Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) beautified the town with many Public Works. It was destroyed by the Scythians (so-called Medes) in 612 B.C. If the date of Jonah was assumed to be about 800 B.C., it would be between the First and the Second Assyrian Empire; when the City was nearly destroyed for its sins, but on account of its repentance was given a new lease of glorious life in the Second Empire.

1479. The point of the allusion here may be thus explained. Nineveh was a great and glorious City. But it became, like Babylon, a city of sin. God sent the prophet Yûnus (Jonah) to warn it. Fult of iniquities though it was, it listened to the warning, perhaps in the person of a few just men. For their sakes, the All-Merciful God spared it, and gave it a new lease of glorious life. According to the chronology in the last note the new lease would be for about two centuries, after which it perished completely for its sins and abominations. Note that its new lease of life was for its collective life as a City, the life of the Present, i.e., of this World. It does not mean that individual sinners escaped the spiritual consequences of their sin, unless they individually repented and obtained God's mercy and forgiveness.

Against their will, to believe!¹⁴⁸⁰

100. No soul can believe, except
By the Will of God.¹⁴⁸¹
And He will place Doubt¹⁴⁸²
(Or obscurity) on those
Who will not understand.

101. Say: "Behold all that is
In the heavens and on earth."
But neither Signs nor Warners
Profit those who believe not.¹⁴⁸³

102. Do they then expect
(Any thing) but (what happened
In) the days of the men
Who passed away before them?
Say: "Wait ye then:
For I, too, will wait with you."¹⁴⁸⁴

حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُوَفَّى إِلَّا
بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلُ الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الدِّينِ
لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ۝

۝ قُلِ انظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَ
الْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُعْطَى الدَّيْتِ وَالشُّدْرِ
عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝

۝ قُلْ لَيْسَ يَنْتَظِرُونَ إِلَّا مِثْلَ
الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قُلْ فَانظُرُوا
إِلَى مَعَاكُم مِّنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ۝

1480. If it had been God's Plan or Will not to grant the limited Free-will that He has granted to man, His omnipotence could have made all mankind alike: all would then have had Faith, but that Faith would have reflected no merit on them. In the actual world as it is, man has been endowed with various faculties and capacities, so that he should strive and explore, and bring himself into harmony with God's Will. Here Faith becomes a moral achievement, and to resist Faith becomes a sin. As a complementary proposition, men of Faith must not be impatient or angry if they have to contend against Unfaith, and most important of all, they must guard against the temptation of forcing Faith, i. e., imposing it on others by physical compulsion, or any other forms of compulsion such as social pressure, or inducements held out by wealth or position, or other adventitious advantages. Forged faith is no faith. They should strive spiritually and let God's Plan work as He wills.

1481. To creatures endued with Will, Faith comes out of an active use of that Will. But we must not be so arrogant as to suppose that that is enough. At best man is weak, and is in need of God's grace and help. If we sincerely wish to understand, He will help our Faith; but if not, our doubts and difficulties will only be increased. This follows as a necessary consequence, and in Quranic language all consequences are ascribed to God, the Cause of Causes.

1482. *Rijs* (from *rajisa*, *yarjasu*, or *rafusa*, *yarfusu*) has various meanings: e. g. (1) filth, impurity, uncleanness, abomination, as in ix. 95; (2) hence, filthy deeds, foul conduct, crime, abomination, thus shading off into (1), as in v. 93; (3) hence punishment for crime, penalty, as in vi. 125; (4) a form of such punishment, viz., doubt, obscurity, or unsettlement of mind, anger, indignation, as in ix. 125, and here, but perhaps the idea of punishment is also implied here.

1483. If Faith results from an active exertion of our spiritual faculties or understanding, it follows that if we let these die, God's Signs in His Creation or in the spoken Word which comes by inspiration through the mouths of His Messengers will not reach us any more than music reaches a deaf man.

1484. Cf. x. 20 and n. 1408. The argument about God's revelation of Himself to man was begun in those early sections of this Sūra and is being now rounded off towards the end of this Sūra with the same formula.

103. In the end We deliver
Our apostles and those who
believe:
Thus is it fitting on Our part
That We should deliver
Those who believe!

ثُمَّ نُنْجِي رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
كَذَلِكَ
حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

SECTION 11.

104. Say: "Oh ye men!
If ye are in doubt
As to my religion, (behold!)¹⁴⁸⁵
I worship not what ye
Worship, other than God!
But I worship God—
Who will take your souls¹⁴⁸⁶
(At death): I am commanded¹⁴⁸⁷
To be (in the ranks)
Of the Believers,¹⁴⁸⁸

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي
شَكٍّ مِنْ دِينِي فَلَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِينَ
تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَلَكِنْ أَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي يَتَوَقَّعُكُمْ
وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

105. "And further (thus): 'set thy face
Towards Religion with true piety,
And never in any wise
Be of the Unbelievers;

وَأَنْ أَوِّجَ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا
وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

106. "Nor call on any,
Other than God;—
Such will neither profit thee
Nor hurt thee: if thou dost,
Behold! thou shalt certainly
Be of those who do wrong."

وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ
وَإِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذًا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

107. If God do touch thee
With hurt, there is none
Can remove it but He:
If He do design some benefit

وَأِنْ يَمْسَسْكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ
لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ

1485. Other people may hesitate, or doubt, or wonder. But the righteous man has no doubt in his own mind, and he declares his Faith clearly and unambiguously to all, as did Muṣṭafā.

1486. The worship of the One and True God is not a fancy worship, to be arrived at merely by reasoning and philosophy. It touches the vital issues of life and death—which are in His hands and His alone.

1487. Nor is the worship of One God an invention of the Prophet. It comes as a direct command, through him and to all.

1488. Individual Faith is good, but it is completed and strengthened by joining or forming a Righteous Society, in which the individual can develop and expand. Islam was never a religion of monks and anchorites. It laid great stress on social duties, which in many ways test the individual's character.

For thee, there is none
Can keep back His favour :
He causeth it to reach
Whomsoever of His servants
He pleaseth. And He is
The Oft-Forgiving, Most
Merciful.¹⁴⁸⁹

قُلْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
يُحْيِي بِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ
وَهُوَ الْعَفُوفُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝

108. Say: "Oh ye men! Now
Truth hath reached you
From your Lord! Those who
receive
Guidance, do so for the good
Of their own souls; those
Who stray, do so to their own loss :
And I am not (set) over you
To arrange your affairs."¹⁴⁹⁰

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ
مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ اهْتَدَى
فَأَنْفُسُهُمْ
وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَأَنْفُسُهُمْ عَلَيْهَا
وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ۝

109. Follow thou the inspiration
Sent unto thee, and be
Patient and constant, till God
Do decide : for He
Is the Best to decide.¹⁴⁹¹

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ
وَاصْبِرْ حَتَّىٰ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ
وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ۝



1489. God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Even when we suffer under trials and tribulations, it is for our good, and no one can remove them except He, when, in His Plan, he sees it to be for the best. On the other hand, there is no power that can intercept His blessings and favours, and His bounty flows freely when we are worthy, and often when we are not worthy of it.

1490. The *Furqān*, the Criterion between right and wrong, has been sent to us from God. If we accept guidance, it is not as if we confer favours on those who bring us guidance. They suffer unselfishly for us, in order that we may be guided for our own good. On the other hand, if we reject it, it is our own loss. We have a certain amount of free-will, and the responsibility is ours, and cannot be shifted to the Teachers sent by God.

1491. When, in spite of all the efforts of the men of God, people do not accept Truth, and evil seems to flourish for a time, we must wait and be patient, but at the same time we must not give up hope or persevering effort. For thus only can we carry out our part in the Plan of God.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA XI (Hūd).

For the chronological place of this Sūra and the general argument of Sūras x to xv, see Introduction to S. x.

In subject-matter this Sūra supplements the preceding one. In the last Sūra stress was laid on that side of God's dealings with man which leans to Mercy: here stress is laid on the side which deals with justice and the punishment of Sin when all Grace is resisted.

Summary

God's revelation of mercy, His dealings with man, and His long-suffering patience are contrasted with man's ingratitude, his love of falsehood and vanity, and his crookedness (xi.1-24, and C. 104).

Noah's unselfishness and humility in teaching his people the Truth of God were traduced by the ungodly, and his Message ridiculed and rejected. But he built his Ark under directions from God; and was saved, with peace and blessings, while his rejecters perished (xi. 25-49, and C. 105).

The prophet Hūd preached to his people 'Ād against false gods, and the prophet Šalīḥ to his people Thamūd against dishonouring the symbol of God's bounty. In both cases God's Signs were rejected, and the rejecters were blotted out (xi. 50-68, and C. 106).

Lot's people were given to abominations: ~~Abraham~~ pleaded for them, and Lot was sent out to them, but they went deeper and deeper into sin and suffered the Penalty. Shu'aib's people, the Midianites, were warned against fraud and mischief, but they reproached him with helplessness and were themselves destroyed (xi 69-95, and C. 107).

It is arrogant leaders like Pharaoh who mislead men, and men bring ruin on themselves. But God is just. The penalty for sin is real and abiding; therefore shun all wrong-doing, and serve God whole-heartedly (xi. 96-123, and C. 108).

C. 104.—God's Revelation teaches the Truth: it warns
(xi.1-24.) Against wrong and gives glad tidings to the righteous:
Ungrateful man folds up his heart
And fails to see how all Nature points
To God and to the Hereafter: he but seeks
Petty issues, forgetting the Cause of Causes.
Not all the wisdom of man can produce
Aught like the Message which comes from God,
As the Light that leads and the Mercy
That forgives. Who then but will humble
Himself before God, seeking His light and His voice?

Sūra XI.

Hud (The Prophet *Hud*).*In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*1. **AL. TA. IR.** ¹⁴⁹³

(This is) a Book,
With verses basic or fundamental¹⁴⁹³
(Of established meaning),
Further explained in detail,—
From One Who is Wise
And Well-Acquainted (with all things):

2. (It teacheth) that ye should
Worship none but God.
(Say:) "Verily I am ¹⁴⁹⁴
(Sent) unto you from Him
To warn and to bring
Glad tidings:

3. "(And to preach thus), 'Seek ye
The forgiveness of your Lord,
And turn to Him in repentance;
That He may grant you
Enjoyment, good (and true),
For a term appointed,
And bestow His abounding grace
On all who abound in merit!¹⁴⁹⁵
But if ye turn away,
Then I fear for you
The Penalty of a Great Day:

4. "'To God is your return,
And He hath power
Over all things.'"

5. Behold! they fold up¹⁴⁹⁶
Their hearts, that they may lie
Hid from Him! Ah! even
When they cover themselves
With their garments, He knoweth
What they conceal, and what
They reveal: for He knoweth

11 Well the (inmost secrets)

30 Of the hearts¹⁴⁹⁷



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
۱- اَلرَّاتِ كَتَبْتُ اَحْكَمْتَ اِيْثُنْه
ثُمَّ فَضَّلْتُ مِنْ لَدُنْ
حَكِيْمٍ خَيْرٍ ۝

۲- اَلَا تَعْبُدُوْا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ
اِنِّىْ لَكُمْ مِنْهُ
نَذِيْرٌ وَبَشِيْرٌ ۝

۳- وَاِنْ اَسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوْا اِلَيْهِ
يَتَّبِعْكُمْ مَّتَاعًا حَسَنًا اِلَىٰ اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ
وَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّ اَخَاْفَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابُ
يَوْمٍ كَبِيْرٍ ۝

۴- اِلَىٰ اللّٰهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝
۵- اَلَا اِنَّهُمْ يَكْتُمُوْنَ صُدُوْرَهُمْ لِيَسْتَخْفُوْا
مِنْهُ ۚ اَلَا جِنَّةً يَسْتَغْشُوْنَ ثِيَابَهُمْ
يَعْلَمُوْا مَا يُصْرُوْنَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُوْنَ
اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ۝

1492. For the meaning of these mystic Letters, see Introduction to S. x.

1493. See n. 347 to iii. 7. Every basic principle is included in God's Revelation, and it is further illustrated and explained in detail.

1494. *Muṣṭafā's* Message—as was the Message of all apostles—was to warn against evil, and to bring the glad tidings of God's Mercy and Grace to all who would receive it in Faith and trust in God. This double Message is preached illustratively in this *Sūra*.

1495. The enjoyment of all good and true things in life refers, I think, to the present life with its limited term, and the abounding Grace refers to the higher spiritual reward, which begins here but is completed in the life to come.

1496. The heart (literally *breast* in Arabic) is already well guarded in the body; and secrets are supposed to be hidden in the heart or breast. Foolish persons might further cover up their hearts with cloaks, but even so, nothing can be hidden from God.

1497. Cf. iii. 119.

6. ~~There~~ there is no moving creature
On earth but its sustenance¹⁴⁹⁴
Dependeth on God: He knoweth
The time and place of its
Definite abode and its
Temporary deposit:¹⁴⁹⁹
All is in a clear Record.¹⁵⁰⁰

7. He it is Who created
The heavens and the earth
In six Days¹⁵⁰¹—and His Throne¹⁵⁰²
Was over the Waters—¹⁵⁰³
That He might try you,¹⁵⁰³
Which of you is best
In conduct. But if
Thou wert to say to them,
"Ye shall indeed be raised up
After death", the Unbelievers
Would be sure to say,¹⁵⁰⁴
"This is nothing but
Obvious sorcery!"

8. If We delay the penalty
For them for a definite term,
They are sure to say,
"What keeps it back?"¹⁵⁰⁵

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا
عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَ
مُسْتَوْدَعَهَا

كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ○

— وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ
لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا
وَلَكِنْ قُلْتُ إِنَّكُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ

الْمَوْتِ

لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ○

— وَلَكِنْ أَخَّرْنَا عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابَ إِلَى
أُمَّةٍ مَعْدُودَةٍ لِيَقُولُوا مَا نُنْجِسُهُ

1498. Cf. vi. 59. Nothing happens in Creation except by the Word of God and with the knowledge of God. Not a leaf stirs but by His Will. Its maintenance in every sense is dependent on His Will.

1499. *Mustaqarr*—definite abode; where a thing stops or stays for some time, where it is established. *Mustawda'*—where a thing is laid up or deposited for a little while. Referring to animals, the former denotes its life on this earth; the latter its temporary pre-natal existence in the egg or the womb and its after-death existence in the tomb or whatever state it is in until its resurrection.

1500. Cf. vi. 59 and n. 880, and x. 61 and n. 1450.

1501. See n. 1031 to vii. 54

1502. It is scientifically correct to say that all life was evolved out of the waters, and this statement also occurs in the Qur'ān, xxi. 30. The Throne of God's authority is metaphorically expressed as over the waters, i.e., as regulating all life. Some such mystic meaning, I think; also attaches to the Gen. i. 2. The past sense "was" refers to the time before life developed in solid forms, on land and in air.

1503. The Creation we see around us is not idle sport or play (in Hindi, *Līla*) or whim on the part of God. It is the medium through which our spiritual life is to develop, with such free-will as we have. 'This life is our testing time.'

1504. The Unbelievers, who do not believe in a Future life, think all talk of it is like a sorcerer's talk, empty of reality. But in this they show their ignorance, and they are begging the question.

1505. As much as to say: "Oh! all this talk of punishment is nonsense. There is no such thing!"

Ah ! On the day it (actually)
Reaches them, nothing will
Turn it away from them,
And they will be completely
Encircled by that which
They used to mock at !

SECTION 2.

9. If We give man a taste
Of Mercy from Ourselves,
And then withdraw it from him,
Behold ! he is in despair
And (falls into) blasphemy. ¹⁵⁰⁶
10. But if We give him a taste
Of (Our) favours after
Adversity hath touched him,
He is sure to say,
"All evil has departed from
me : " ¹⁵⁰⁷
Behold ! he falls into exultation
And pride.
11. Not so do those who show
Patience and constancy, and ^{work} ¹⁵⁰⁸
Righteousness ; for them
Is forgiveness (of sins)
And a great reward.
12. Perchance thou mayest (feel
The inclination) to give up
A part of what is revealed ¹⁵⁰⁹
Unto thee, and thy heart

أَلَا يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمْ لَيْسَ مَصْرُوفًا عَنْهُمْ
وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ
مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ٥

٩- وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً
ثُمَّ نَزَعْنَاهَا مِنْهُ
إِنَّهُ لَيَكْفُرُ ٥
١٠- وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَاهُ نَعْمَاءَ
بَعْدَ ضَرَاءٍ مَسْتَهْزِءٍ
لَيَقُولَنَّ ذَهَبَ الشَّيْءُ عَنِّي
إِنَّهُ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُورٌ ٥

١١- إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ
وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ٥

١٢- فَلَعَلَّكَ تَارِكٌ
بَعْضَ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ

1506. He does not realise that some kinds of chastening are good for discipline and the training of our spiritual faculties.

1507. He takes it as a matter of course, or as due to his own merit or cleverness ! He does not realise that both in good and ill fortune there is a beneficent purpose in the Plan of God.

1508. Their attitude is the right one : to take ill-fortune with fortitude and good fortune with humility, and in either case go on persevering in good deeds to their fellow-creatures.

1509. Every man of God, when he not only encounters opposition, but is actually accused of falsehood and those very evils which he is protesting against, may feel inclined, in his human weakness, to ask himself the question, "Supposing I omit this little point, will God's Truth then be accepted more readily ?" Or he may think to himself, "If I had only more money to organise my campaign, or something which will draw people's attention, like the company of an angel, how much better can I push my Message ?" He is told that truth must be delivered as it is revealed, even though portions of it may be unpalatable, and that resources and other means to draw people to him are beside the point. He must use just such resources and opportunities as he has, and leave the rest to God.

Feeleth straitened lest they say,
 "Why is not a treasure sent down
 Unto him, or why does not
 An angel come down with him?"
 But thou art there only to warn!
 It is God that arrangeth
 All affairs!

13. Or they may say, "He forged it."
 Say, "Bring ye then ten Sūras
 Forged, like unto it, and call
 (To your aid) whomsoever
 Ye can, other than God!—
 If ye speak the truth!"¹⁵¹⁰

14. "If then they (your false gods)
 Answer not your (call),
 Know ye that this Revelation
 Is sent (replete) with the
 knowledge
 Of God, and that there is
 No god but He! Will ye
 Even then submit (to Islam)?"

15. Those who desire
 The life of the Present
 And its glitter, — to them
 We shall pay (the price
 Of) their deeds therein, —
 Without diminution.¹⁵¹¹

16. They are those for whom
 There is nothing in the Hereafter
 But the Fire: vain
 Are the designs they frame therein,
 And of no effect
 Are the deeds that they do!

17. Can they be (like) those
 Who accept a Clear (Sign)
 From their Lord, and whom
 A witness from Himself¹⁵¹²

وَمَا يَنْفَعُ بِهِ صَدْرُكَ أَنْ يَقُولُوا
 لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ كُتُبٌ
 أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ مَلَكٌ رَأْسًا أَنْتَ نَذِيرٌ
 وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ۝

۱۳- أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ
 مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيْنَ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَعْظَمْتُمْ
 قُرْنَ دُونَ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِيْنَ ۝

۱۴- قَالُوا لِمَ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكَ
 قَالُوا لَعَلَّمُوا أَنْزَلَ بِعِلْمِ اللَّهِ
 وَإِنْ كُنَّا لِرَآئِهِ لَآكَاهُوْنَ
 قُلْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ۝

۱۵- مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
 وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيهَا
 وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُبْخَسُوْنَ ۝

۱۶- أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
 إِلَّا النَّارُ وَحِطَّ مَا صَنَعُوا فِيهَا
 وَبِطُلٍّ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝

۱۷- أَقْسَمُ كَانَ عَلَى بَيْتِنَا
 مَنْ رَبِّهِ وَيَتْلُوهُ شَاهِدٌ مِنْهُ

1510. Cf. ii. 23 and x. 38.

1511. If worldly men desire the glitter of this world, they shall have it in full measure, but it is false glitter, and it involves the negation of that spiritual life which comes from the guidance of the inner light and from the revelation of God, as described in verse 17 below.

1512. "A witness from Himself": i.e., the Book which was given to Muḥammad, the Holy Qur'ān, which is compared to the original Revelation given to Moses. We make no difference between one true and genuine Message and another, nor between one apostle and another,—for they all come from the One True God.

Doth teach, as did the Book
Of Moses before it,—a guide ¹⁵¹³
And a mercy? They believe
Therein; but those of the Sects
That reject it,—the Fire
Will be their promised
Meeting-place. Be not then
In doubt thereon: for it is
Truth from thy Lord:
Yet many among men
Do not believe!

18. ~~Who~~ Who doth more wrong
Than those who invent a lie
Against God? They will be
Turned back to the presence
Of their Lord, and the witnesses
Will say, "These are the ones
Who lied against their Lord!
Behold! the Curse of God
Is on those who do wrong!—
19. "Those who would hinder (men)
From the path of God
And would seek in it
Something crooked: these were
They who denied the
Hereafter!" ¹⁵¹⁴
20. They will in no wise
Frustrate (His design) on earth,
Nor have they protectors
Besides God! Their penalty ¹⁵¹⁵
Will be doubled! They lost
The power to hear,
And they did not see!
21. They are the ones who
Have lost their own souls:

وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كَتَبَ مُوسَىٰ إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً
أُولَٰئِكَ يُدْعَوْنَ بِهِ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ مِنَ
الْأَحْزَابِ فَالْعَذَابُ مُوعَدٌ
فَلَا تَكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِنْهُ
إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

١٨- وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
أُولَٰئِكَ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
وَيَقُولُ الْأَشْهَادُ
هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
أَلَا لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ
١٩- الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا
وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ

٢٠- أُولَٰئِكَ لَمْ يَكُونُوا مُفْجِرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
يُضْعَفُ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مَا كَانُوا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
السَّمْعَ وَمَا كَانُوا يُبْصِرُونَ
٢١- أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ

1513. "Guide": the Arabic word here is *Imām*, a leader, a guide, one that directs to the true Path. Such a direction is an instance of the Mercy and Goodness of God to man. The Qur-ān and the Apostle Muḥammad are also called, each, a Guide and a Mercy, and so are these epithets applicable to previous Books and Apostles.

1514. Cf. vii. 45.

1515. Cf. vii. 38. In this context, it is implied that they committed a two-fold wrong: (1) in inventing falsehoods against God, which deadened their own soul, and (2) in leading others astray or hindering them from God's path. Thus they lost the faculty of hearing, which they might have used to hear the Word of God, and they blinded the faculty of sight by shutting out God's light.

And the (fancies) they invented
Have left them in the lurch!

22. Without a doubt, these
Are the very ones who
Will lose most in the Hereafter!

23. But those who believe
And work righteousness,
And humble themselves
Before their Lord,¹⁵¹⁶
They will be Companions
Of the Garden, to dwell
Therein for aye!

24. These two kinds (of men)
May be compared to
The blind and deaf,
And those who can see
And hear well. Are they
Equal when compared?
Will ye not then take heed?

وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ٥

٢٢ لَا جَرَمَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ الرَّاخِصُونَ ٥

٢٣ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
وَأَخْبَتُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ٥

٢٤ مَثَلُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كَالْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْأَصْمَىٰ
وَالْبَصِيرِ وَالسَّمِيعِ
هَلْ يَسْتَوِينَ مَثَلًا أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ٥

C. 105.—Noah walked righteously and humbly
(xi. 25-49.) As in the sight of God. With unselfish
Love for his people he warned them
And taught them. But they did flout
And reject his Message with scorn
And insults. God gave him directions
To build an Ark against the impending
Flood which was to purify the world
From Sin and Unrighteousness. In it
Were saved Noah and those who believed.
So were promised salvation and God's Peace
And Blessings to the Righteous evermore!

SECTION 3.

25. We sent Noah to his People
(With a mission): "I have come
To you with a Clear Warning:

26. "That ye serve none but God:
Verily I do fear for you

٢٥ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ
إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ٥

٢٦ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ

1516. Note that the humility is to be "before their Lord," i.e., in God's sight. There is no virtue, quite the contrary, in rubbing our noses to the ground before men. We are not to be arrogant even before men because we are humble as in God's sight. Nor does true humility lose self-confidence: for that self-confidence arises from confidence in the support and help of God.

The Penalty of a Grievous
Day.¹⁵¹⁷

27. But the Chiefs of the
Unbelievers

Among his People said :
" We see (in) thee nothing
But a man like ourselves :
Nor do we see that any
Follow thee but the meanest
Among us, in judgment immature :
Nor do we see in you (all)
Any merit above us :
In fact we think ye are liars ! " ¹⁵¹⁸

28. He said : " Oh my People !
See ye if (it be that)
I have a Clear Sign
From my Lord, and that He
Hath sent Mercy unto me
From His own Presence, but
That the Mercy hath been
Obscured from your sight ? ¹⁵¹⁹
Shall we compel you
To accept it when ye
Are averse to it ?

29. " And oh my People !
I ask you for no wealth

عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمِ النِّمْرِ

٢٧- فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ
مَا تَكْرِمُكَ إِلَّا بَشَرًا مِثْلَنَا
وَمَا تَكْرِمُكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
هُمْ أَرَادُوا لَنَا بِدَعَى الرَّأْيِ
وَمَا تَكْرِي لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ
بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَذِبِينَ ○

٢٨- قَالَ يَقَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي
وَأَتَيْنِي رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ
فَعَتَيْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَنْ تَكُونُوا وَأَنْ تَكُونُوا كَرِهُونَ ○

٢٩- وَيَقَوْمِ لَا آسَأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا

1517. Noah's mission was to a wicked world, plunged in sin. The mission had a double character, as in the mission of all men of God: it had to warn men against evil and call them to repentance, and it had to give them the glad tidings of God's Grace in case they turned back to God: it was a Guidance and a Mercy.

1518. The Unbelievers were impelled by three powerful human motives of evil to resist Grace: (1) jealousy of other men; they said, "Why, you are no better than ourselves," half perceiving the Prophet's superiority, and half ignoring it; (2) contempt of the weak and lowly, who are often better intellectually, morally, and spiritually; they said, "We cannot believe or do what these fellows, our inferiors in social rank, believe or do!"; (3) arrogance and self-sufficiency, which is a vice cognate to (2), looked at from a different angle; they said, "We are really better than the lot of you!" Now the claim made on behalf of God's Message attacked all these three attitudes. And all they could say against it was to abuse it impatiently, and call it a lie.

1519. Noah's answer (like that of the Man of God who spoke in later ages in Mecca and Medina) is a pattern of humility, gentleness, firmness, persuasiveness, truth, and love for his own people. First, he meekly (not exultingly) informs them that he has got a Message from God. Secondly, he tells them that it is a Message of Mercy even in its warning, though in their arrogance the Mercy may be hidden from them. Thirdly, he tells them plainly that there can be no compulsion in Religion: but will they not accept with goodwill what is for their own benefit? He pleads with them as one of their own.

In return : my reward
Is from none but God : ¹⁵²⁰
But I will not drive away
(In contempt) those who believe :
For they are the ones that desire
To meet their Lord, and ye
I see are the ignorant ones !

إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ
وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
إِنَّهُمْ مُلْقَاوَاتِهِمْ
وَالَّذِينَ أَرَادُوا تَجَاهُلُونَ ○

30. " And oh my People !
Who would help me against God
If I drove them away ?
Will ye not then take heed ? ¹⁵²¹

ۛ- وَلِيَقُومُوا مِنِّي مَنَ اللَّهُ
إِنْ طَرَدْتَهُمْ أَكَلَا لَدُنْكَ كُزُونٌ ○

31. " I tell you not that ¹⁵²²
With me are the Treasures ¹⁵²³
Of God, nor do I know
What is hidden,
Nor claim I to be
An angel. Nor yet
Do I say, of those whom
Your eyes do despise ¹⁵²⁴
That God will not grant them
(All) that is good :
God knoweth best
What is in their souls :
I should, if I did,
Indeed be a wrong-doer."

ۛ- وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِندِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ
وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ
وَلَا أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ
وَلَا أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ
لَن يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا
اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ
إِنِّي إِذَا أَلَمْتُ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

32. They said : " Oh Noah !
Thou hast disputed with us,

ۛ- قَالُوا لَيْسَ لَهُ قُدْرَةٌ عَلَيْنَا

1520. The fourth point in Noah's address meets their accusation that he was a liar, implying that he was serving some selfish end of his own : on the contrary, he says, he seeks no reward from them but will bear any insults they heap on him, for he looks to God rather than men. But, fifthly, if they insult the poor and needy who come to him in Faith, and think that he would send them away in order to attract the great ones of the land, he tells them plainly that they are mistaken. In fact, (sixthly), he has no hesitation in telling the blunt truth that they are the ignorant ones, and not the poor who came to seek God's Truth !

1521. But (seventhly) again he pleads, with as much earnestness as ever, that he is one of themselves, and just doing his truest duty. Would they have him do less ? Indeed, would they not themselves see the Truth and come into the goodly company of Believers ?

1522. The eighth point that Noah urges is that he is not a mere vulgar soothsayer pretending to reveal secrets not worth knowing, nor an angel living in another world, with no ties to them. He is their real well-wisher, delivering a true Message from God.

1523. Cf. vi. 30 and n. 867.

1524. But Noah will not close his argument without defending the men of Faith whom the Chiefs despise because they are lacking in worldly goods. He tells them plainly that God perhaps sees in them something in which they, the arrogant Chiefs, are lacking. Their spiritual faculties can only be appreciated truly by Him to Whom all the secrets of the spirit are open. But he, Noah, must declare boldly his own Faith, and this is the ninth point in his argument.

And (much) hast thou prolonged
The dispute with us : now
Bring upon us what thou
Threatenest us with, if thou
Speakest the truth ! " 1525

فَاكْثُرْتَ جِدَالَنَا
فَاتَّبَعْنَا بِمَا تَعُدُّنَا

إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ○

33. He said : " Truly, God
Will bring it on you
If He wills,—and then,
Ye will not be able
To frustrate it ! " 1526

۳۳- قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ

إِنْ شَاءَ

وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ○


34. " Of no profit will be
My counsel to you,
Much as I desire
To give you (good) counsel,
If it be that God
Willeth to leave you astray : 1527
He is your Lord !
And to Him will ye return ! " 1527

۳۴- وَلَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ نُصْحِي

إِنْ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَنْصَحَ لَكُمْ

إِنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُغْوِيَكُمْ

هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ○

35.  Or do they say,
" He has forged it " ? Say :
" If I had forged it,
On me were my sin !
And I am free
Of the sins of which
Ye are guilty ! " 1528

۳۵- أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ

قُلْ إِنْ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَعَلَىٰ إِجْرَائِي

وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُجْرِمُونَ ○

1525. To Noah's address the worldly Chiefs give a characteristic reply. In its aggressive spirit it is the very antithesis of the gentle remonstrances of Noah. Because he had gently and patiently argued with them, they impatiently accuse him of "disputing with them" and "prolonging the dispute". They are unable to deal with his points. So they arrogantly throw out their challenge, which is a compound of hectoring insolence, unreasoning scepticism, and biting irony. "You foretell disaster to us if we don't mend our ways! Let us see you bring it on! Now, if you please! Or shall we have to call you a liar?"

1526. To the blasphemous challenge addressed to Noah his only answer could be: "I never claimed that I could punish you. All punishment is in the hands of God, and He knows best when His punishment will descend. But this I can tell you! His punishment is sure if you do not repent, and when it comes, you will not be able to ward it off!"

1527. But Noah's heart bleeds for his people. They are preparing their own undoing! All his efforts are to be vain! Obstinate as they are, God's grace must be withdrawn, and then who can help them, and what use is any counsel? But again he will try to remind them of their Lord, and turn their face to Him. For their ultimate return to His judgment-seat is certain, to answer for their conduct.

1528. The fine narrative of dramatic power is here interrupted by a verse which shows that the story of Noah is also a Parable for the time and the ministry of Muhammad the Apostle. The wonderful force and aptness of the story cannot be denied. The enemy therefore turns and says, "Oh! but you invented it!" The answer is, "No! but it is God's own truth! You may be accustomed to dealing in falsehoods, but I protest that I am free from such sins." The place of this verse here corresponds to the place of verse 49 at the end of the next Section.

While understanding this verse to refer to Muṣṭafā, as most of the accepted Commentators understand it, it is possible also, I think, to read it into the story of Noah, for all Prophets have similar spiritual experiences.

SECTION 4.

36. ~~It~~ was revealed to Noah:
 "None of thy People will
 believe¹⁵²⁹
 Except those who have believed
 Already! So grieve no longer
 Over their (evil) deeds.

37. "But construct an Ark
 Under Our eyes and Our¹⁵³⁰
 Inspiration, and address Me
 No (further) on behalf
 Of those who are in sin:
 For they are about to be
 Overwhelmed (in the Flood)."

38. Forthwith he starts
 Constructing the Ark:
 Every time that the Chiefs
 Of his People passed by him,
 They threw ridicule on him.¹⁵³¹
 He said: "If ye ridicule
 Us now, we (in our turn)
 Can look down on you
 With ridicule likewise!¹⁵³²

39. "But soon will ye know
 Who it is on whom
 Will descend a Penalty
 That will cover them

٣٦- وَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ نُوحٍ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ
 قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ آمَنَ
 فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ۝

٣٧- وَأَصْنَعُ الْفُلَ
 بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيُنَا
 وَلَا تَحْطِطْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
 إِنَّهُمْ مُّغْرَقُونَ ۝

٣٨- وَيَصْنَعُ الْفُلَ
 وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَأَ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا
 مِنْهُ
 قَالَ إِنْ تَسْخَرُوا مِنِّي
 فَإِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُونَ ۝

٣٩- فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ
 مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ

1529. The story of Noah is resumed. A point was reached, when it was clear that there was no hope of saving the sinners, who were courting their own destruction. It was to be a great Flood. So Noah was ordered to construct a great Ark or Ship, not a sailing ship, but a heavy vessel to remain afloat in the Flood, so that the righteous could be saved in it.

1530. It was to be built under the special instructions of God, to serve the special purpose it was intended to serve.

1531. The ridicule of the sinners, from their own point of view, was natural. Here was a preacher turned carpenter! Here was a plain in the higher reaches of the Mesopotamian basin, drained by the majestic Tigris, over 800 to 900 miles from the sea (the Persian Gulf) in a straight line! Yet he talks of a flood like the Sea! All material civilisations pride themselves on their Public Works and their drainage schemes. And here was a fellow relying on God! But did not their narrow pride seem ridiculous also to the man of God? Here were men steeped in sin and insolence! And they pit themselves against the power and the promise of God! Truly a contemptible race is man!

1532. The Arabic Aorist may be construed either by the present tense or the future tense, and both make good sense here. Following Zamakhshari, I construe in the present tense, because the future is so tragic for the sinners. For the time being the worldly ones looked down on the Believers as they always do; but the Believers relied on God, and pitied their critics for knowing no better! — for their arrogance was really ridiculous.

With shame,—will be unloosed
A Penalty lasting :"

40. ~~At~~ length, behold !
There came Our Command,
And the fountains of the earth ¹⁵³³
Gushed forth! We said:
"Embark therein, of each kind
Two, male and female, ¹⁵³⁴
And your family—except
Those against whom the Word
Has already gone forth,—¹⁵³⁵
And the Believers."
But only a few
Believed with him.

41. So he said : "Embark ye
On the Ark,
In the name of God,
Whether it move
Or be at rest!
For my Lord is, be sure,
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!"

42. So the Ark floated
With them on the waves
(Towering) like mountains. ¹⁵³⁶
And Noah called out
To his son, who had
Separated himself (from the rest):
"Oh my son! embark
With us, and be not
With the Unbelievers!"

يُخْرِجُهُ وَيَجْعَلْ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابَ مُقِيمٍ ۝

٣٠- حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا
وَفَارَ التَّوَلُّوۥ
قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ
اثنَيْنِ وَاهْلِكْ إِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ
الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ آمَنَ
وَمَا آمَنَ مَعَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ۝

٣١- وَقَالَ ارْكَبُوا فِيهَا
بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ يَجْعَلْهَا وَهْنًا
إِنْ رَّبِّي لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝

٣٢- وَهِيَ تَجْرِي بِهِمْ فِي مَوْجٍ كَالْهَبَالِ
وَنَادَىٰ نُوحٌ ابْنَهُ
وَكَانَ فِي مَغْرَلٍ
يُبْنَىٰ اِرْكَبْ مَعَنَا
وَلَا تَكُن مَعَ الْكَافِرِينَ ۝

1533. *Fār-at-tannūru*. Two interpretations have been given : (1) the fountains or the springs on the surface of the earth bubbled over or gushed forth; or (2) the oven (of God's Wrath) boiled over. The former has the weight of the best authority behind it and I prefer it. Moreover, the same phrase occurs in xiii. 27, where it is a clause coordinated (as here) with the coming of God's Command. These two passages may be compared with liv. 11-12, where it is said that water poured forth from the skies and gushed forth from the springs. This double action is familiar to any one who has seen floods on a large scale. The rain from above would saturate the great Ararat Plateau, and give great force to the springs and fountains in the valley of the Tigris below.

1534. *Zaujaini*: the dual number refers to the two individuals in each pair of opposite sexes. Some of the most authoritative Commentators (e.g., Imām Rāzi) construe in this sense, though others construe it to mean two pairs of each species.

1535. A disobedient and recalcitrant son (or step-son or grandson) of Noah is mentioned below (xi. 42-43, 45-46). A member of the family, who breaks away from the traditions of the family in things that matter, ceases to share in the privileges of the family.

1536. The simile of mountains applies to the waves, which were mountain high,—literally, for the peaks were being submerged.

43. The son replied : " I will
Betake myself to some mountain :¹⁵³⁷
It will save me from
The water." Noah said :
" This day nothing can save,
From the Command of God,
Any but those on whom
He hath mercy !"—
And the waves came
Between them, and the son
Was among those
Overwhelmed in the Flood.

٢٣- قَالَ سَاوِي إِلَى جَبَلٍ
يَعْمُومُنِي مِنَ الْمَاءِ
قَالَ لَا عَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ
مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَهُ
وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ
فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمَغْرُقِينَ ○

44. ~~When~~ When the word went forth :¹⁵³⁸
" Oh earth ! swallow up
Thy water, and oh sky !
Withhold (thy rain) !
And the water abated,
And the matter was ended.
The Ark rested on Mount¹⁵³⁹
Jūdi, and the word
Went forth : " Away
With those who do wrong !"

٢٣- وَقِيلَ يَا أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي
مَاءَكَ وَابْسَأْ
أَقْلَعِي وَغِيضَ الْمَاءِ وَتُخَيِّ الْأُمُ
وَاسْتَوَتْ عَلَى الْجُودِيِّ
وَقِيلَ بُعْدًا لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

1537. The Unbelievers refuse to believe in God, but have great faith in material things! This young man was going to save himself on mountain peaks, not knowing that the peaks were themselves being submerged.

1538. A wonderful passage. The whole picture is painted in just a few words. The chain of material facts are linked together, not only in their relations to each other, but also in their relation to the spiritual forces that control them, and the spiritual consequences of Sin and wrong-doing. The drowning in the material sense was the least part of the Penalty. A whole new world came into existence after the Deluge—as always happens after any great catastrophe, like the World War of 1914-18.

1539. Let us get a little idea of the geography of the place. The letters J, B, and K are philologically interchangeable, and Jūdi, Gūdi Kūdi are sounds that can pass into each other. There is no doubt that the name is connected with the name "Kurd", in which the letter r is a later interpolation, for the oldest Sumerian records name a people called Kūti or Gūtū as holding the middle Tigris region not later than 2000 B.C. (see E. B., Kurdistan). That region comprises the modern Turkish district of Bohtan, in which Jabal Jūdi is situated (near the frontiers of modern Turkey, modern 'Irāq, and modern Syria), and the town of Jazirat ibn 'Umar, (on the present Turco-Syrian frontier), and it extends into 'Irāq and Persia. The great mountain mass of the Ararat plateau dominates this district. This mountain system "is unique in the Old World in containing great sheets of water that are bitter lakes without outlets, Lake Van and Lake Urmīya being the chief" (E. B., Asia). Such would be the very region for a stupendous Deluge if the usual scanty rainfall were to be changed into a very heavy downpour. A glacier damming of Lake Van in the Ice Age would have produced the same result. The region has many local traditions connected with Noah and the Flood. The Biblical legend of Mount Ararat being the resting place of Noah's Ark is hardly plausible, seeing that the highest peak of Ararat is over 16,000 feet high. If it means one of the lower peaks of the Ararat system, it agrees with the Muslim tradition about Mount Jūdi (or Gūdi), and this is in accordance with the oldest and best local traditions. These traditions are accepted by Josephus, by the Nestorian Christians, and indeed by all the Eastern Christians and Jews, and they are the best in touch with local traditions. See (Viscount) J. Bryce, "Transcaucasia and Ararat," 4th ed., 1896, p. 216.

45. And Noah called upon His Lord, and said :
 " Oh my Lord ! surely
 My son is of my family !
 And Thy promise is true,
 And Thou art
 The Justest of Judges ! "

46. He said : " Oh Noah !
 He is not of thy family : ¹⁵⁴⁰
 For his conduct is unrighteous.
 So ask not of Me
 That of which thou
 Hast no knowledge !
 I give thee counsel, lest
 Thou act like the ignorant ! "

47. Noah said : " Oh my Lord !
 I do seek refuge with Thee,
 Lest I ask Thee for that
 Of which I have no knowledge.
 And unless Thou forgive me
 And have Mercy on me,
 I should indeed be lost ! " ¹⁵⁴¹

48. The word came : " Oh Noah !
 Come down (from the Ark)
 With Peace from Us,
 And Blessings on thee
 And on some of the Peoples
 (Who will spring) from those
 With thee : but (there will be
 Other) Peoples to whom We
 Shall grant their pleasures ¹⁵⁴²
 (For a time), but in the end
 Will a grievous Penalty
 Reach them from Us." ¹⁵⁴³

٢٥- وَنَادَىٰ تَوْبَةً رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ
 رَبِّ إِنِّي ابْنُ مِنْ أَهْلِي
 وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ
 وَأَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ الْحَكَمِينَ ○

٢٦- قَالَ يَتُوبُ إِلَهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ
 إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ
 فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ
 إِنِّي أَعْطِيكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ○

٢٧- قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ
 أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ
 وَإِلَّا تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي
 أَكُنْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ○

٢٨- قِيلَ يَتُوبُ مِنْ أَهْلِي
 بِسَلَامٍ مِنَّا وَبَرَكَاتٍ عَلَيْكَ
 وَعَلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِمَّنْ مَعَكَ
 وَأُمَمٌ سَنُضِعُّهُمُ
 فِي الْعَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ ○

1540. See n. 1535 above. Like all men of God, Noah was kind-hearted, but he is told that there can be no compromise with evil. And Noah acknowledges the reproof. There was a wife of Noah, who was also an unbelieving woman (lxvi. 10), and she suffered the fate of Unbelievers.

1541. Noah, in his natural affection and respect for ties of relationship, was overcome with human weakness in wishing to reverse the law of spiritual justice. It was not sin but ignorance. His ignorance was corrected by divine inspiration, and he immediately saw the full Truth, acknowledged his error, and asked for God's forgiveness and mercy. This is the standard set for us all.

1542. Cf. ii. 126.

1543. Those who truly seek God's light and guidance and sincerely bend their will to His Will are freely admitted to God's grace. Notwithstanding any human weaknesses in them, they are advanced higher in the spiritual stage on account of their Faith, Trust, and Striving after Right. They are given God's Peace, which gives the soul true calmness and strength, and all the blessings that flow from spiritual life. This was given not only to Noah and his family but to all the righteous people who were saved with him. And their descendants were also promised those blessings on condition of righteousness. But some of them fell from grace, as we know in history. God's grace is not a social or family privilege. Each people and each individual must earnestly strive for it and earn it.

49. Such are some of the stories
Of the Unseen, which We
Have revealed unto thee :
Before this, neither thou
Nor thy People knew them.
So persevere patiently :
For the End is for those
Who are righteous.¹⁵⁴⁴

۴۹- تِلْكَ مِنْ أَثْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ
نُوحِنَا إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ
وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا فَاصْبِرْ
إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ۝

- C. 106.—Awful were the fates of the 'Ād
(xi. 50-68.) And the Thamūd, two mighty peoples
Of ancient Arabia. They rejected
God and His Message and went on
In their evil ways,—the 'Ād
In their superstitions and arrogance,
And the Thamūd in their entrenched
Selfishness, denying to others the gifts
Of God's spacious earth! How swiftly
Were they wiped out, as if they
Had never been? But wrong can never stand!

SECTION 5.

50. No the 'Ad People
(We sent) Hūd, one
Of their own brethren.
He said : " Oh my people !
Worship God ! ye have
No other god but Him.¹⁵⁴⁵
(Your other gods) ye do nothing
But invent !

۵۰- وَإِلَى عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا
قَالَ يَقُومُوا عِبَادُوا اللَّهَ
مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ
إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا مُفْتَرُونَ ۝

51. " Oh my people ! I ask of you
No reward for this (Message).
My reward is from none
But Him who created me :
Will ye not then understand ?

۵۱- يَقُومُوا لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا
إِنْ أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ۝

52. " And oh my people ! Ask
Forgiveness of your Lord,

۵۲- وَلِيَقُومُوا اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ

1544. Cf. n. 1528 to xi. 35. The sum of the whole matter is that the righteous, who work for God and their fellow-men, may be traduced, insulted, and persecuted. But they will be sustained by God's Mercy. They must go on working patiently, for the End will all be for them and their Cause.

1545. Cf. the story of Hūd the Apostle of the 'Ad People, in vii. 65-72. There the argument was how other Peoples treated their Apostles as the Meccans were treating Muṣṭafā. Here we see another point emphasized : the insolence of the 'Ad in obstinately adhering to false gods after the true God had been preached to them, God's long-suffering grace to them, and finally God's justice in bringing them to book while the righteous were saved.

The locality in which the 'Ad flourished is indicated in n. 1040 to vii. 65.

And turn to Him (in repentance) :
 He will send you the skies ¹⁵⁴⁶
 Pouring abundant rain,
 And add strength
 To your strength : ¹⁵⁴⁷
 So turn ye not back
 In sin ! "

53. They said : " Oh Hūd !
 No Clear (Sign) hast thou
 Brought us, and we are not
 The ones to desert our gods
 On thy word ! Nor do we
 Believe in thee ! " ¹⁵⁴⁸

54. " We say nothing but that
 (Perhaps) some of our gods
 May have seized thee ¹⁵⁴⁹
 With imbecility." He said :
 " I call God to witness,
 And do ye bear witness,
 That I am free from the sin
 Of ascribing, to Him,

ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلَ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 مِدْرَارًا
 وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلَى قُوَّتِكُمْ
 وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِينَ

٥٣- قَالُوا يَهُودُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ
 وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِي آلِهَتِنَا عَنْ قَوْلِكَ
 وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

٥٤- إِنْ تَقُولُ إِلَّا
 اعْتَرَاكَ بَعْضُ آلِهَتِنَا بِسُوْرٍ
 قَالَ إِنِّي أَشْهَدُ اللَّهَ وَاشْهَدُوا
 أَنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ

1546. The beautiful metaphor about the skies coming down with rain has been obscured unnecessarily in most translations. The country of the 'Ad was an arid country, and rain was the greatest blessing they could receive. We can imagine this being said in a time of famine, when the people performed all sorts of superstitious rites and invocations instead of turning to the true God in faith and repentance. Further, when we remember that there were, in this tract in ancient times, dams like that at Ma'arib, for the storage of rain water, the effect is still further heightened in pointing to God's care and mercy in His dealings with men.

1547. Adding strength to strength may refer to increase of population, as some Commentators think. While other parts of Arabia were sparsely populated, the irrigated lands of the 'Ad supported a comparatively dense population and added to their natural strength in the arts of peace and war. But the term used is perfectly general. They were a powerful people in their time. If they obeyed God and followed the law of righteousness, they would be still more powerful, for "righteousness exalteth a nation."

1548. The argument of the Unbelievers is practically this : "We are not convinced by you ; we don't want to be convinced ; we think you are a liar,— or perhaps a fool ! " (See next verse).

1549. See n. 1548 above. Continuing their argument, the Unbelievers make a show of making all charitable allowances for Hūd, but in reality cut him to the quick by bringing in their false gods. "To be quite polite," said they, "we will not say that you are exactly a liar ! Perhaps you have been touched with imbecility ! Ah yes ! You rail against what you call our false gods ! Some of them have paid you out, and made you a fool ! Ha ! ha ! " This mockery is even worse than their other false accusations. For it sets up false gods against the One True God, even in dealing with Hūd. So Hūd replies, with spirit and indignation : "At least keep God's name out of your futile talk ! You know as well as I do, that I worship the One True God ! You pretend that your false gods can smite a true man of God ! I accept the challenge. Scheme and plot against me as you may, all of you—you and your gods ! See if you have any power ! I ask for no quarter from you ! My trust is in God ! "

55. "Other gods as partners !
So scheme (your worst) against me,
All of you, and give me
No respite.¹⁵⁵⁰

هـ-من دُونِهِ لَكِنِّي فِي
جَمِيعَتِكُمْ لَا أَتُخَيَّرُ
○

56. "I put my trust in God,
My Lord and your Lord !
There is not a moving
Creature, but He hath
Grasp of its fore-lock.¹⁵⁵¹
Verily, it is my Lord
That is on a straight Path.¹⁵⁵²

هـ-إِنِّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ
مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا
إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ○

57. "If ye turn away,—
I (at least) have conveyed
The Message with which I
Was sent to you. My Lord
Will make another People
To succeed you, and you
Will not harm Him¹⁵⁵³
In the least. For my Lord
Hath care and watch
Over all things."

هـ-إِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ
مِمَّا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَيْكُمْ
وَيَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبِّي قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ
وَلَا تَضُرُّونَهُ شَيْئًا
إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيفٌ ○

58. "So when Our decree
Issued, We saved Hūd
And those who believed
With him, by (special) Grace¹⁵⁵⁴
From Ourselves: We saved them
From a severe Penalty.

هـ-وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا هُودًا
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا
وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ○

59. Such were the 'Ad People:
They rejected the Signs

هـ-وَذَٰلِكَ عَادٌ جَحَدُوا بِآيَاتِ

1550. Cf. vii. 193 and n. 1168.

1551. *Grasp of the fore-lock*: an Arabic idiom, referring to a horse's fore-lock. The man who grasps it has complete power over the horse, and for the horse the fore-lock is as it were the crown of his beauty, the sum of his power of self-assertion. So God's power over all creatures is unlimited and no one can withstand His decree. Cf. xvi. 15-16.

1552. That is, the standard of all virtue and righteousness is in the Will of God, the Universal Will that controls all things in goodness and justice. You are on a crooked Path. God's Path is a straight Path.

1553. Hūd was dealing with a people of pride and obstinate rebellion. He tells them that their conduct will only recoil on themselves. It can do no harm to God or in any way frustrate the beneficent Plan of God. He will only put some other people in their place to carry out His Plan. That Plan is referred to in the next sentence as "care and watch" over all his Creation.

1554. A few just men might suffer for the iniquities of the many. But God's Plan is perfect and saves His own by special Grace, if they have Faith and Trust in Him.

Of their Lord and Cherisher;
Disobeyed His Apostles;
And followed the command
Of every powerful, obstinate
Transgressor.¹⁵⁵⁵

60. And they were pursued
By a Curse in this Life,—
And on the Day of Judgment.
Ah! Behold! For the 'Ad
Rejected their Lord and Cherisher!
Ah! Behold! Removed (from sight)
Were 'Ad the People of Hüd!

SECTION 6.

61. ~~To~~ the Thamūd People
(We sent) Ṣāliḥ, one
Of their own brethren.¹⁵⁵⁶
He said: "Oh my People!
Worship God: ye have
No other God but Him.
It is He Who hath produced you ¹⁵⁵⁷
From the earth and settled you
Therein: then ask forgiveness
Of Him, and turn to Him
(In repentance): for my Lord
Is (always) near, ready
To answer."

62. They said: "Oh Ṣāliḥ!
Thou hast been of us!—

رَبِّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا رُسُلَهُ
وَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ٥

٦- وَأَنبَعَثُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً
وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
أَلَّا إِنَّكَ عَادًا كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ
أَلَّا بَعْدَ الْعَادِ قَوْمٌ مِّثْلُهُمْ ٥

٧- وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا
قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ
هُوَ أَنشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا
فَأَسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ
إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ ٥

٦٢- قَالُوا يُضْلِكُ قَدْ كُنْتَ مِنَّا

1555. Instead of following the beneficent Lord who cherished them, they followed every rebel against God's Law, if he only obtained a little power to dazzle them.

1556. The story of Ṣāliḥ and the Thamūd people has been told from another point of view in vii. 73-79. The difference in the point of view there and here is the same as in the story of Hūd: see n. 1545 to xi. 50. Note how the story now is the same, and yet new points and details are brought out to illustrate each new argument. Note, also, how the besetting sin of the 'Ad—pride and obstinacy—is distinguished from the besetting sin of the Thamūd—the oppression of the poor, as illustrated by the test case and symbol of the She-camel: see n. 1044 to vii. 73. All sin is in a sense pride and rebellion; yet sins take particular hues in different circumstances, and these colours are brought out as in a most artistically painted picture—with the greatest economy of words and the most piercing analysis of motives. For the locality and history of the Thamūd see n. 1043 to vii. 73.

1557. For *Anshaa* as a process of creation see n. 923 to vi. 98 and the further references given there. As to his body, man has been produced from earth or clay, and his settlement on earth is a fact of his material existence. Therefore we must conform to all the laws of our physical being, in order that through our life on this earth we may develop that higher Life which belongs to the other part of our being, our spiritual heritage. Through the use we make of our health, of our tilth, of our pastures, of material facts of all kinds, will develop our moral and spiritual nature.

A centre of our hopes ¹⁵⁵⁸
 Hitherto! Dost thou (now)
 Forbid us the worship
 Of what our fathers worshipped?
 But we are really
 In suspicious (disquieting)
 Doubt as to that to which
 Thou invitest us."

63. He said: "Oh my people!
 Do ye see?—If I have
 A Clear (Sign) from my Lord
 And He hath sent Mercy
 Unto me from Himself,—who ¹⁵⁵⁹
 Then can help me
 Against God if I were
 To disobey Him? What
 Then would ye add
 To my (portion) but perdition?"

64. "And oh my people!
 This she-camel is
 A symbol to you: ¹⁵⁶⁰
 Leave her to feed
 On God's (free) earth,
 And inflict no harm
 On her, or a swift Penalty
 Will seize you!"

65. But they did ham-string her.
 So he said: "Enjoy yourselves
 In your homes for three days: ¹⁵⁶¹
 (Then will be your ruin):

مَرْجُوا قَبْلَ هَذَا أَتَنْهَيْنَا
 أَنْ نَعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا
 وَإِنَّا لَكِن شَاكٍ
 قِمْنَا نَدْعُوْنَا إِلَىٰ آلِهَةٍ مُّريبٍ ○

٦٣- قَالَ يَقُولُوا ابْدِئْ لَنَا آيَةً
 عَلَىٰ يَدَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّي وَإِنِّي مِنْهُمْ
 رَحِمَةٌ
 فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ عَصَيْتُهُ
 فَمَا تَزِيدُنِي ذُلًّا وَمَتْنًا غَيْرَ تَخْشَعُ ○

٦٤- وَيَقُولُوا هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ
 آيَةٌ فَذُرُّوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أََرْضِ اللَّهِ
 وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسَوْءٍ
 فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيبٌ ○

٦٥- فَعَفَرُوا بِهَا فَقَالَ تَمَكُّنُوا فِي
 دَارِكُمْ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ

1558. ʿĀliḥ's life with his people had been so righteous (like that of al-ʿAmin in later times) that he might have been chosen leader or king if he had only conformed to their superstitions and supported their sins. But he was born for a higher mission—that of a preacher of truth and righteousness and an ardent opponent of selfish privilege and a champion of the rights of humanity on God's free earth by the symbol of the she-camel: see n. 1044 to vii, 73.

1559. "God has been good to me and bestowed on me His light and the inestimable privilege of carrying His mission to you. Don't you see that if I fail to carry out his mission, I shall have to answer before Him? Who can help me in that case? The only thing which you can add to my misfortunes would be total perdition in the spiritual world."

1560. ʿĀliḥ does not merely take up a negative attitude. He puts forward the she-camel as a Symbol: see n. 1044 to vii, 73. "Give up your selfish monopoly. Make God's gifts on this free earth available to all. Give the poor their rights, including grazing rights on common lands. Show your penitence and your new attitude by leaving this she-camel to graze freely. She is a Symbol, and therefore sacred to you." But their only reply was to defy the appeal and ham-string the camel. And so they went the way of all sinners—to total perdition.

1561. Just three days' time for further thought and repentance! But they paid no heed. A terrible earthquake came by night, preceded by a mighty rumbling blast (probably volcanic), such as is well-known in earthquake areas. It came by night and buried them in their own fortress homes, which they thought such places of security! The morning found them lying on their faces hidden from the light. How the mighty were brought low

There is a promise
Not to be belied ! "

66. When Our Decree issued,
We saved Ṣāliḥ and those
Who believed with him,
By (special) Grace from
Ourselves—¹⁵⁰²
And from the Ignominy
Of that Day. For thy Lord—
He is the Strong One, and Able
To enforce His Will.

67. The (mighty) Blast ¹⁵⁰³ overtook
The wrong-doers, and they
Lay prostrate in their homes
Before the morning,—

68. As if they had never
Dwelt and flourished there.
Ah! Behold! For the Thamūd
Rejected their Lord and Cherisher!
Ah! Behold! Removed
(From sight) were the Thamūd! ¹⁵⁰⁴

ذَلِكَ وَعْدٌ غَيْرُ مَكْدُوبٍ ○

٦٦- فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا صَالِحًا
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا
وَمِن خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ ○

٦٤- وَاتَّخَذَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ
فَاصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جِثِيًّا ○

٦٨- كَانُوا لَمْ يَعْنُوا فِيهَا
أَلَا إِنَّ تَعْمُودًا كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ
أَلَا بُعْدًا لِتَعْمُودٍ ۚ

C. 107.—When the angels, on a mission to Sodom
(xi. 69-95.) And Gomorrah, Cities of the Plain,
Passed by Abraham, he entertained them
And received from them the Good News
Of the line of Prophets to spring from his loins.
He tried, in his goodness of heart, to intercede
For the wicked Cities, but they were steeped
In Sin and past all hope of repentance.
Lūṭ preached to them, but they flouted him
And went to their fate, as also did Midian
The People of Shu'aib who destroyed their commerce
By fraudulent dealings and love of brute force.
Marvellous are God's Mercies, and strange
Are the ways of ungrateful man !

SECTION 7.

69. Where came Our Messengers
To Abraham with glad tidings.

٦٩- وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبَشَرِ

1502. Cf. xi. 58 above and n. 1554. For 'Azīz, see n. 2818 to xxii. 40.

1503. Cf. vii. 78 and n. 1047,—also n. 1561 above.

1504. Cf. xi. 60 above.

They said, "Peace!" He answered,
"Peace!" and hastened
To entertain them
With a roasted calf.¹⁵⁶⁵

قَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ
أَنْ جَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِينٍ ○

70. But when he saw
Their hands went not
Towards the (meal), he felt
Some mistrust of them,
And conceived a fear of them.^{1561-A}
They said: "Fear not:
We have been sent
Against the people of Lūṭ."¹⁵⁶⁶

٤- فَلَئِنْ رَأَىٰ يَدَيْهِمْ لَا تَقْبَلُ إِلَٰهَهُمْ
وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً
قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ
إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِ لُوطٍ ○

71. And his wife was standing
(There), and she laughed:¹⁵⁶⁷
But We gave her
Glad tidings of Isaac,
And after him, of Jacob.

١- وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ قَائِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ
فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ
وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ إِسْحَاقَ يَعْقُوبُ ○

1565. According to the sequence of Sūra vii, the next reference should be to the story of Lūṭ, and that story commences at xi. 77 below, but it is introduced by a brief reference to an episode in the life of his uncle Abraham, from whose seed sprang the peoples to whom Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad Muḥṭafa were sent with the major Revelations. Abraham had by this time passed through the fire of persecutions in the Mesopotamian valleys; he had left behind him the ancestral idolatry of Ur of the Chaldees; he had been tried and he had triumphed over the persecution of Nimrūd; he had now taken up his residence in Canaan, from which his nephew Lot (Lūṭ) was called to preach to the wicked Cities of the Plain east of the Dead Sea which is itself called Baḥr Lūṭ. Thus prepared and sanctified, he was now ready to receive the Message that he was chosen to be the progenitor of a great line of Prophets, and that Message is now referred to.

Can we localise Nimrūd? If local tradition in place-names can be relied upon, this king must have ruled over the tract which includes the modern Nuṣrūd, on the Tigris, about twenty miles south of Mosul. This is the site of Assyrian ruins of great interest, but the rise of Assyria as an Empire was of course much later than the time of Abraham. The Assyrian city was called Kalakh (or Calah), and archaeological excavations carried out there have yielded valuable results, which are however irrelevant for our Commentary.

1565-A. With oriental hospitality Abraham received the strangers with a salutation of Peace, and immediately placed before them a sumptuous meal of roasted calf. The strangers were embarrassed. They were angels and did not eat. Hospitality is refused in the East, it means that those who refuse it meditate no good to the would-be host. Abraham therefore had a feeling of mistrust and fear in his mind, which the strangers at once set at rest by saying that their mission was in the first place to help Lūṭ as a warner to the Cities of the Plain. But in the second place they had good news for Abraham: he was to be the father of great peoples!

1566. *The people of Lūṭ* means the people to whom Lūṭ was sent on his mission of warning, the people of the wicked Cities of the Plain, Sodom and Gomorrah.

1567. The narrative is very concise, and most of the details are taken for granted. We may suppose that the angels gave the news first to Abraham, who was already, according to Baighāwī, 120 years of age, and his wife Sarah was not far short of 100. She was probably screened according to oriental custom. She could hardly believe the news. In her scepticism (some say in her joy) she laughed. But the news was formally communicated to her that she was to be the mother of Isaac, and through Isaac, the grandmother of Jacob. Jacob was to be a fruitful tree, with his twelve sons. But hitherto Abraham had had no son, and Sarah was past the age of child-bearing. "How could it be?" she thought.

72. She said : " Alas for me !¹⁵⁶⁸
Shall I bear a child,
Seeing I am an old woman,
And my husband here
Is an old man ?
That would indeed
Be a wonderful thing !"

٤٢- قَالَتْ يُونُكُنِي ٱلْءَالِدُ ۖ وَأَنَا عَجُوزٌ
وَهَذَا بَعْلُنِ شَيْخًا
إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ ۝

73. They said : " Dost thou
Wonder at God's decree ?
The grace of God
And His blessings on you,
Oh ye people of the house !¹⁵⁶⁹
For He is indeed
Worthy of all praise,
Full of all glory !"¹⁵⁷⁰

٤٣- قَالُوا ٱلْعَجَبُ مِنۢ مِّنۡ أَمْرِ ٱللّٰهِ
رَحِمَتُ ٱللّٰهِ وَبَرَكَتُهُۥ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ
إِنَّهُۥ حَمِيدٌ مُّجِيدٌ ۝

74. ~~When~~ When fear had passed
From (the mind of) Abraham
And the glad tidings¹⁵⁷¹
Had reached him, he
Began to plead with Us
For Lût's people.

٤٤- فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنِ ٱلْءَبْرَهِيمِ ٱلرُّؤُءُ
وَجَآءَتْهُ ٱلْبَشَرَى
يُجَادِلُنَا فِى قَوْمِ لُوطٍ ۝

75. For Abraham was,
Without doubt, forbearing
(Of faults), compassionate,
And given to look to God.¹⁵⁷²

٤٥- إِنَّ ٱلْءَبْرَهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ
أَوَّاهٌ مُّنِيبٌ ۝

76. Oh Abraham ! Seek not this,
The decree of thy Lord
Hath gone forth : for them
There cometh a Penalty

٤٦- يَٰءَبْرَهِيمُ ٱعْرِضْ عَنِ هَٰذَا إِنَّهُۥ قَدْ
جَآءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ۖ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَأَتِىنَّكَ

1568. This is as much a sigh of past regrets as of future wistfulness !

1569. *Ahl-ul-bait*=people of the house, a polite form of addressing the wife and members of the family. Blessings are here invoked on the whole family.

1570. This little episode of Abraham's life comes in fitly as one of the illustrations of God's wonderful providence in His dealings with man. Abraham had had a tussle with his father on behalf of Truth and Unity (vi. 74); he had passed through the fire of temptation unscathed (xxi. 68-69); he had travelled to far countries, and was now ready to receive his great mission as the fountain-head of apostles in his old age. Humanly speaking it seemed impossible that he should have a son at his age, and yet it came to pass and became a corner-stone of sacred history.

1571. *Glad tidings*: not only that he was to have a son, but that he was to be a fountain-head of apostles. So he now begins to plead at once for the sinful people to whom Lot was sent as a warner.

1572. Like Muṣṭafā, Abraham had three qualities in a pre-eminent degree, which are here mentioned: (1) he was long-suffering with other people's faults; (2) his sympathies and compassion were very wide; and (3) for every difficulty or trouble he turned to God and sought Him in prayer.

That cannot be turned back !¹⁵⁷³

عَزِيزٌ مُّرْدُدٌ

77. When Our Messengers
Came to Lūṭ, he was
Grieved on their account
And felt himself powerless
(To protect) them. He said :
" This is a distressful day." ¹⁵⁷⁴

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا
سِيقَ إِتْمُومًا وَصَاقَ بِهِمْ ذُرْعًا
وَقَالَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ

78. And his people came
Rushing towards him,
And they had been long
In the habit of practising
Abominations. He said :
" Oh my people ! Here are
My daughters : they are purer
For you (if ye marry) !¹⁵⁷⁵
Now fear God, and cover me not
With shame about my guests !
Is there not among you
A single right-minded man ?"

وَجَاءَهُ قَوْمُهُ يُهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ
وَمِنْ قَبْلُ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ
قَالَ يَتْلُو هَؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ
فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَلَا تُخْزُونِ فِي ضَيْفِي
أَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَشِيدٌ

79. They said : " Well dost thou
Know we have no need
Of thy daughters : indeed
Thou knowest quite well
What we want !"

قَالُوا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا لَنَا
فِي بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَاجَةٍ
وَأِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا تُرِيدُ
قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةٌ

80. He said : " Would that I
Had power to suppress you

1573. This is a sort of prophetic apostrophe. All your care and sympathy are useless, oh Abraham ! All your warning, oh Lūṭ, will be unheeded ! Alas ! they are so deep in sin that nothing will reclaim them ! This is illustrated in verse 79 below. And now we proceed to Lūṭ and how he was dealt with by the wicked.

1574. The story of Lot, as referred to in vii. 80-84, laid emphasis on the rejection of Lot's mission by men who practised unnatural abominations. See n. 1049 to vii. 80. Here the emphasis is laid on God's dealings with men—in mercy for true spiritual service and in righteous wrath and punishment for those who defy the laws of nature established by Him ;—also on men's dealings with each other and the contrast between the righteous and the wicked who respect no laws human or divine.

1575. The Biblical narrative suggests that the daughters were married and their husbands were close by (Gen. xix. 14) and that these same daughters afterwards committed incest with their father and had children by him (Gen. xix. 31). The holy Qurān nowhere suggests such abominations. Some Commentators suggest that " my daughters " in the mouth of a venerable man like Lūṭ, the father of his people, may mean any young girls of those Towns. " My son " (*waladī*) is still a common mode of address in Arabic-speaking countries when an elderly man addresses a young man.

Or that I could betake
Myself to some powerful
support."¹⁵⁷⁶

81. (The Messengers) said: " Oh Lot !
We are Messengers from thy
Lord !

By no means shall they
Reach thee ! Now travel
With thy family while yet
A part of the night remains,
And let not any of you
Look back : but thy wife ¹⁵⁷⁷
(Will remain behind) :
To her will happen
What happens to the people.
Morning is their time appointed :
Is not the morning high ? "

82. When Our decree issued,
We turned (the cities)
Upside down, and rained down
On them brimstones ¹⁵⁷⁸
Hard as baked clay, ¹⁵⁷⁹
Spread, layer on layer,—

83. Marked as from thy Lord : ¹⁵⁸⁰

أَوْ أَوِّىَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ شَدِيدٍ ۝

٨١- قَالُوا يَلُوطُ إِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ
لَنْ يَصْلُوَا إِلَيْكَ
فَأَسِرْ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ
وَلَا يَتَّبِعْكَ مِنْكَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا أَمْرَتَكَ
إِنَّكَ مُصِيبُهُمْ مَّا أَصَابَهُمْ
إِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ
أَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ ۝

٨٢- فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا
جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا
حِجَابًا مِّنْ سِجِّيلٍ مِّنْ مَّطْهُودٍ ۝
٨٣- مَسْمُومَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ

1576. Lot seemed helpless in the situation in which he found himself,—alone against a rabble of people inflamed with evil passions. He wished he had had the strength to suppress them himself or had had some powerful support to lean on ! But the powerful support was there, though he had not realised it till then. It was the support of God. His guests were not ordinary men, but Angels who had come to test the people before they inflicted the punishment. They now declared themselves, and gave him directions to get away before the morning, when the punishment would descend on the doomed Cities of the Plain.

1577. Even in Lot's household was one who detracted from the harmony of the family. She was disobedient to her husband, and he was here obeying God's Command. She looked back and shared the fate of the wicked inhabitants of the Cities of the Plain : see also lxvi. 10. The Biblical narrative suggests that she was turned into a pillar of salt (Gen. xix. 26).

1578. Cf. vii. 84 and n. 1052.

1579. *Sijjil*, a Persian word Arabicised, from *Sang-i-gil*, or *Sang-i-gil*, stone and clay, or hard as baked clay, according to the *Qamūs*. Sodom and Gomorrah were in a tract of hard, caky, sulphurous soil, to which this description well applies. Cf. li. 33, where the words are "stones of clay" (*ḥijārat min sijjil*) in connection with the same incident. On the other hand, in cv. 4, the word *sijjil* is used for pellets of hard-baked clay in connection with Abrahā and the Companions of the Elephant.

1580. If we take the words literally, they would mean that the showers of brimstones were marked with the destiny of the wicked as decreed by God. But would it not be better to take them figuratively, to mean that the shower of brimstones was especially appointed in God's Decree or Plan to mark the punishment for the crimes of Sodom and Gomorrah ?

Nor are they ¹⁵⁸¹ ever far
From those who do wrong !

SECTION. 8.

84. ¹⁵⁸² To the Madyan people
(We sent) Shu'aib, one
Of their own brethren : he said :
" Oh my people ! worship God :
Ye have no other god
But Him. And give not
Short measure or weight :
I see you in prosperity, ¹⁵⁸³
But I fear for you
The Penalty of a Day
That will compass (you) all round.

85. " And oh my people ! give
Just measure and weight,
Nor withhold from the people
The things that are their due : ¹⁵⁸⁴
Commit not evil in the land
With intent to do mischief.

86. " That which is left you
By God is best for you, ¹⁵⁸⁵

وَمَا هِيَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ بِبَعِيدٍ ۝

٨٣- وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا
قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ
غَيْرُهُ

وَلَا تَقْضُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْيَيزَانَ
إِلَىٰ أَكْثَرِكُمْ وَيُغَيِّرِ
وَإِلَىٰ أَخَافَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ يُحْشَدُونَ

٨٥- وَيٰقَوْمِ اقْوُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْيَيزَانَ
بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخُسُوا الْبَاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ
وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ۝

٨٦- بَقِيَّتُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ

1581. *They* : Arabic, *hiyu* : some Commentators take the pronoun to refer to the wicked cities so destroyed: the meaning then would be: those wicked cities were not so different from other cities that do wrong, for they would all suffer similar punishment ! Perhaps it would be better to refer "they" to the stones of punishment by a metonymy for "punishment" : "punishment would not be far from any people that did wrong".

1582. Cf. vii. 85-93. The location of Madyan is explained in n. 1053 to vii. 85 and the chronological place of Shu'aib in n. 1064 to vii. 93. The point of the reference here is different from that in S. vii. Here the emphasis is on God's dealings with men and men's crooked and obstinate ways: there the emphasis was rather on their treatment of their Prophet, thus throwing light on some of the sins of the Meccans in later times.

1583. The Midianites were a commercial people, and their besetting sin was commercial selfishness and fraudulent dealings in weights and measures. Their Prophet tells them that that is the surest way to cut short their "prosperity," both in the material and the spiritual sense. When the Day of Judgment comes, it will search out their dealings through and through : "it will compass them all round," and they will not be able to escape then, however much they may conceal their frauds in this world.

1584. Both Plato and Aristotle define Justice as the virtue which gives every one his due. From this point of view Justice becomes the master virtue, and includes most other virtues. It was the lack of this that ruined the Midianites. Their selfishness was "intent on mischief," i.e., spoiling other people's business by not giving them their just dues.

1585. God's Law does not require that a man should deprive himself of the things that are necessary for his own well-being and development. If he follows God's Law, what is left him after he renders to others their just dues will be not only enough, but will be the best possible provision for his own physical and spiritual growth. Even the kindness and consideration which God's Law inculcates are in the best interests of the man's own soul. But of course the kindness and consideration must be spontaneous. It must flow from the man's own will, and cannot be forced on him by the Teachers who come from God to show him the way.

If ye (but) believed !
But I am not set
Over you to keep watch !"

87. They said : " Oh Shu'aib !
Does thy (religion of) prayer
Command thee that we
Leave off the worship which
Our fathers practised, or
That we leave off doing
What we like with our property ? ¹⁵⁸⁶
Truly, thou art the one
That forbearth with faults
And is right-minded ! ¹⁵⁸⁷

88. He said : " Oh my people !
See ye whether I have
A Clear (Sign) from my Lord,
And He hath given me
Sustenance (pure and) good ¹⁵⁸⁸
As from Himself ? I wish not,
In opposition to you, to do
That which I forbid you to do.
I only desire (your) betterment
To the best of my power ;
And my success (in my task)
Can only come from God.
In Him I trust,
And unto Him I look.

89. " And oh my people !
Let not my dissent (from you) ¹⁵⁸⁹

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ
وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ ۝

٨٧- قَالُوا يَشْعَبُ أَصْلُكَ
تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ تَتْرُكَ
مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا
أَوْ أَنْ تَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشَاءُ ۚ
إِنَّكَ لَكُنْتَ السَّالِمِ الرَّشِيدِ ۝

٨٨- قَالَ يَقُولُونَ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ
عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي
وَرَزَقْنِي مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا
وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَمْلِكَ لَكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ
عَنْهُ إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ
وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ
عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ۝

٨٩- وَيَقُولُونَ لَا تَبْحِرْ مِنْكُمْ

1586. It is the way of selfish and material-minded people (1) to scoff at spiritual things like prayer and worship and (2) to hug their own property rights as if there were not other rights even greater than those of property !

1587. They grow sarcastic against Shu'aib. In effect they say : " You are a fine man ! You teach us that we must be kind and forbearing with other people's faults, and now get at what you call our sins ! You think you are the only right-minded man ! "

1588. Shu'aib's answer is gentle and persuasive. First, he would ask them not to fly into a passion but satisfy themselves that he had a mission from God, and was working in the discharge of his mission : he was not merely finding fault with them. Secondly, though he was a poor man, he asked them to note that he was happy and comfortable : God had given him good sustenance, material and spiritual, as from Himself, though he did not resort to the sort of tricks which they considered necessary for their prosperity. Thirdly, if he forbade them anything he wished to apply the same standards to himself. Fourthly, all the advice which he is giving them is for their own good, which he desires to advance to the utmost of his powers. Fifthly, he is humble for himself ; he would not set himself up to be their teacher or guide, or expect to be obeyed ; the success of any of his efforts on their behalf must come from God's grace ; will they not therefore turn to God, so that God's grace can heal them ?

1589. Finally, Shu'aib appeals to them as man to man. " Because I differ from you, do not think I do not love you or feel for you. Let it not drive you into obstinacy and sin. I see things that you do not. My vision takes in the fate of previous generations who sinned and perished on account of their sins. Turn therefore to God in repentance."

Cause you to sin,
Lest ye suffer
A fate similar to that
Of the people of Noah
Or of Hūd or of Ṣāliḥ,
Nor are the people of Lūṭ
Far off from you! ¹⁵⁹⁰

سَعَلَى أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ
مِثْلُ مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ
أَوْ قَوْمَ هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمَ صَالِحٍ
وَمَا قَوْمُ لُوطٍ مِنْكُمْ بِبَعِيدٍ ○

90. " But ask forgiveness
Of your Lord, and turn
Unto Him (in repentance):
For my Lord is indeed
Full of mercy and loving-kindness."

۹۰- وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ
ثُمَّ تَوُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ
إِنَّ رَبِّي رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ ○

91. They said : " Oh Shu'aib!
Much of what thou sayest
We do not understand! ¹⁵⁹¹
In fact among us we see
That thou hast no strength!
Were it not for thy family,
We should certainly
Have stoned thee!
For thou hast among us
No great position! " ¹⁵⁹²

۹۱- قَالُوا يَشْعِيبُ مَا نَفْقَهُ
كَذِبًا أَمْ يَمُنُّ أَتَقُولُ
وَلَا لَكَ قُوَّةٌ بِنَا ضَعِيفًا
وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنَاكَ
وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيزٍ ○

92. He said : " Oh my people!
Is then my family
Of more consideration with you
Than God? For ye cast Him
Away behind your backs
(With contempt). But verily
My Lord encompasseth
On all sides
All that ye do! ¹⁵⁹³

۹۲- قَالَ يَقَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ
أَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَالْحَدُّ شُرُوءُ وَأَرْءَاكُمْ ظَاهِرِينَ
إِنَّ رَبِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ○

93. " And oh my people!
Do whatever ye can :

۹۳- وَيَقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ

1590. The generation of Lūṭ was not far off from the generation of Shu'aib chronologically if Shu'aib was only in the fourth generation from Abraham (see n. 1064 to vii. 93). Nor was its habitat geographically far from that of Shu'aib, as the Midianites wandered about from Sinai Peninsula to the Jordan valley (see n. 1053 to vii. 85).

1591. Spiritual things are easy to understand if we bring the right mind to them. But those who are contemptuous of them deliberately shut their eyes to God's Signs, and then pretend in their superior arrogance that they are 'quite beyond them'!

1592. What they do understand is brute strength. They practically say: "Don't you see that we have all the power and influence, and you, Shu'aib, are only a poor Teacher? We could stone you or imprison you or do what we like with you! Thank us for our kindness that we spare you—for the sake of your family. It is more than you yourself deserve!"

I will do (my part): ¹⁸⁹⁴
 Soon will ye know
 Who it is on whom
 Descends the Penalty
 Of ignominy, and who
 Is a liar!
 And watch ye!
 For I too am watching
 With you!" ¹⁸⁹⁵

إِنِّي عَامِلٌ
 سَوْتٌ تَعْمَلُونَ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ
 يُخْزِيهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ
 وَأَنْتُمْ بِنَايَ مَعَكُمْ رَقِيبٌ ۝

94. When Our decree issued,
 We saved Shu'aib and those
 Who believed with him,
 By (special) Mercy from
 Ourselves: ¹⁸⁹⁶
 But the (mighty) Blast did seize
 The wrong-doers, and they
 Lay prostrate in their homes
 By the morning,—

۹۴- وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْبًا
 وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ
 بِرَحْمَتِنَا
 وَأَخَذَتِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ
 فَاصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جَاثِيْنَ ۝

95. As if they had never
 Dwelt and flourished there! ¹⁸⁹⁷
 Ah! Behold! How the Madyan
 Were removed (from sight)
 As were removed the Thamūd!

۹۵- كَانَ لَمْ يَعْنُوا فِيهَا
 إِلَّا بَعْدَ الْمَدْيَنِ كَمَا بَعْدَ ثَمُودَ ۝

C. 108—How the arrogant Pharaoh misled his people
 (xi. 96-123.) In resisting God's Message through Moses!
 Thus did they ruin themselves! It was they
 Who wronged themselves: for God is ever kind
 And His punishments are just. All men
 Will be brought to His Judgment-seat, and the good
 Will be rewarded with bliss as the evil
 Will be consigned to misery. Eschew evil;
 Stand firm in righteousness; be not immersed
 In the lusts of this world. Learn from the stories
 Of the past, and seek the Lord's Mercy:
 Trust Him and serve and praise Him for ever!

1894. Cf. vi. 135 and n. 957.

1895. If the wicked will continue to blaspheme and mock, what can the godly say but this?—"Watch and wait! God's Plan works without fail! I have faith, and I too will watch with you for its fulfilment." Cf. x. 102, and n. 1484.

1896. Cf. xi. 66 and xi. 58, n. 1354.

1897. Cf. xi. 67-68. The blast was probably the tremendous noise which accompanies volcanic eruptions.

SECTION 9.

96. And we sent Moses, ¹⁵⁹⁸
With our Clear (signs)
And an authority manifest,
97. Unto Pharaoh and his Chiefs :
But they followed the
command ¹⁵⁹⁹
Of Pharaoh, and the command
Of Pharaoh was no right (guide).
98. He will go before his people
On the Day of Judgment,
And lead them into the Fire
(As cattle are led to water) : ¹⁶⁰⁰
But woeful indeed will be
This leading (and) the place led to !
99. And they are followed
By a curse in this (life)
And on the Day of Judgment :
And woeful is the gift
Which shall be given
(Unto them) !
100. These are some of the stories
Of communities, which We
Relate unto thee : of them
Some are standing, ¹⁶⁰¹ and some

- ٩٦- وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا
وَسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ ۝
- ٩٧- إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَاتَّبَعُوهُ أَمْرَ
فِرْعَوْنَ ۖ وَمَا أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيدٍ ۝
- ٩٨- يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
كَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ ۖ
وَبَشِّرِ الْأَوْرَدَ الْمُورَدُ ۝
- ٩٩- وَاتَّبَعُوا فِي هَذِهِ لَعْنَةً
وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
بَشِّرِ الرُّودَ الْمَرْمُودُ ۝
- ١٠٠- ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْقُرَىٰ
نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهَا قَائِمٌ

1598. The story of Moses and Pharaoh is referred to in many places in the Qur'an, each in connection with some special point to be illustrated. Here the point is that God's dealings with man are in all things and at all times just. But man falls under false leadership by deliberate choice and perishes along with his false leaders accordingly. In exercise of the intelligence and choice given him, man should be particularly careful to understand his own responsibilities and to profit from God's Signs, so as to attain to God's Mercy and blessings.

1599. Pharaoh is the type of the arrogant, selfish, and false leader, who poses as a power in rivalry with that of God. Such an attitude seems to attract unregenerate humanity, which falls a willing victim, in spite of the teaching and warning given by the men of God and the many moral and spiritual forces that beckon man towards God's Grace.

1600. *Arwada*=to lead, as cattle, down to their watering place. The metaphor is apt. The true herdsman is trusted by his normal flock, and he leads them in the heat of the day down to pleasant and cool watering places in order that they may slake their thirst and be happy. The false leader does the opposite: he takes them down to the fire of eternal misery. And yet men sin against their own intelligence, and follow the false leader like cattle without intelligence !

1601. *Some are standing*: like corn, which is ready to be reaped. Among the communities which remained was, and is, Egypt, although the Pharaoh and his wicked people have been swept away. The simile of standing corn also suggests that at no time can any town or community expect permanency, except in the Law of the Lord.

Have been mown down
(By the sickle of time).¹⁶⁰²

Except by His leave :
Of those (gathered) some
Will be wretched and some
Will be blessed.¹⁶⁰⁶

إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ۖ فَمِنْهُمْ
شَقِيْقٌ وَسَعِيْدٌ ۝

106. Those who are wretched
Shall be in the Fire:
There will be for them
Therein (nothing but) the heaving
Of sighs and sobs : ¹⁶⁰⁷

۱۰۶- فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُوا فَيُفَى النَّارِ
لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَشَهِيْقٌ ۝

107. They will dwell therein ¹⁶⁰⁸
For all the time that
The heavens and the earth
Endure, except as thy Lord
Willeth: for thy Lord
Is the (sure) Accomplisher
Of what He planneth.

۱۰۷- خَالِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا مَا دَامَتِ
السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ ۖ اِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيْدُ ۝

108. And those who are blessed
Shall be in the Garden:
They will dwell therein ¹⁶⁰⁹
For all the time that
The heavens and the earth
Endure, except as thy Lord
Willeth: a gift without break.¹⁶¹⁰

۱۰۸- وَاَمَّا الَّذِينَ سُوْعُوْا فَيُفَى الْجَنَّةِ
خَالِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا مَا دَامَتِ
السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ ۖ اِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ
عَطَاءٌ غَيْرُ مَجْدُوْدٍ ۝

1606, *Shaqī* (wretched) and *Sa'īd* (blessed) have become almost technical theological terms. They are explained in the four following verses.

1607. The first word, *Zafīr*, translated "sighs", is applied to one part in the process of the braying of an ass, when he emits a deep breath. The second, *Shahīq*, translated "sobs", is the other process in the braying of an ass, when he draws in a long breath. This suggestion of an animal proverbial for his folly implies that the wicked, in spite of their arrogance and insolence in this world below, will at last realise that they have been fools after all, throwing away their own chances whenever they got them. In lxvii. 7 the word *Shahīq* is applied to the tremendous roaring in-take or devouring of Hell-fire.

1608 *Khalidīn*: This is the word which is usually translated "dwell for ever" or "dwell for aye". Here it is definitely connected with two conditions, viz.: (1) as long as the heavens and the earth endure, and (2) except as God wills. Some Muslim theologians deduce from this the conclusion that the penalties referred to are not eternal, because the heavens and the earth as we see them are not eternal, and the punishments for the deeds of a life that will end should not be such as will never end. The majority of Muslim theologians reject this view. They hold that the heavens and the earth here referred to are not those we see now, but others that will be eternal. They agree that God's Will is unlimited in scope and power, but that It has willed that the rewards and punishments of the Day of Judgment will be eternal. This is not the place to enter into this tremendous controversy.

1609. Exactly the same arguments apply as in the last note.

1610. The felicity will be uninterrupted, unlike any joy or happiness which we can imagine in this life and which is subject to chances and changes, as our daily experience shows.

109. Be not then in doubt
As to what these men
Worship. They worship
nothing¹⁶¹¹
But what their fathers worshipped
Before (them) : but verily
We shall pay them back
(In full) their portion¹⁶¹²
Without (the least) abatement.

١٠٩- فَلَا تَكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّمَّا يَعْْبُدُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ
مَا يَعْْبُدُونَ إِلَّا
كَمَا يَعْْبُدُ آبَاؤُهُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَأَنَا الْكَافِرُ لَهُمْ تَصِيدُهُمْ غَيْرَ مُنْقَوِصٍ ۝

SECTION 10.

110. We certainly gave the Book
To Moses, but differences
Arose therein : had it not been
That a Word had gone forth
Before from thy Lord, the matter
Would have been decided¹⁶¹³
Between them : but they
Are in suspicious doubt
Concerning it.¹⁶¹⁴
111. And, of a surety, to all
Will your Lord pay back
(In full the recompense)
Of their deeds : for He
Knoweth well all that they do.¹⁶¹⁵

١١٠- وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَالْتَمَحَّ
فِيهِ
وَلَوْ لَا كَلِمَةٌ
سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ
وَأَتَاهُمُ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِمَّنْ مَرِيبٍ ۝
١١١- وَإِنْ كُلُّ لِنَّا لَيُوقِنُ أَنَّكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ أَغْنَاهُمْ
إِنَّهُمْ يَتَّبِعُونَ خَيْرٌ ۝

112. Therefore stand firm (in the
straight
Path) as thou art commanded,—

١١٢- فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ

1611. Their worship is not based on any spiritual attitude of mind. They merely follow the ways of their fathers.

1612. God will take fully into account all their motives in such mummery as they call worship, and they will have their full spiritual consequences in the future.

1613. Cf. x. 19. Previous revelations are not to be denied or dishonoured because those who nominally go by them have corrupted and deprived them of spiritual value by their vain controversies and disputes. It was possible to settle such disputes under the flag, as it were, of the old Revelations, but God's Plan was to revive and rejuvenate His Message through Islam, amongst a newer and younger people, unhampered by the burden of age-long prejudices.

1614. Cf. xi. 62. There is always in human affairs the conflict between the old and the new,—the worn-out system of our ancestors, and the fresh living spring of God's inspiration fitting in with new times and new surroundings. The former look upon this latter not only with intellectual doubt but with moral suspicion, as did the People of the Book upon Islam, with its fresh outlook and vigorous realistic way of looking at things.

1615. Cf. xi. 109. above, with which the argument is now connected up by recalling the characteristic word and leading to the exhortation (in the verses following) to stand firm in the right path freshly revealed.

Thou and those who with thee
Turn (unto God); and transgress
not

(From the Path) : for He seeth
Well all that ye do.

113. And incline not to those
Who do wrong, or the Fire
Will seize you; and ye have
No protectors other than God,
Nor shall ye be helped.

114. And establish regular prayers
At the two ends of the day ¹⁶¹⁶
And at the approaches of the
night : ¹⁶¹⁷
For those things that are good
Remove those that are evil : ¹⁶¹⁸
Be that the word of remembrance
To those who remember
(their Lord) :

115. And be steadfast in patience ;
For verily God will not suffer
The reward of the righteous
To perish.

116. ~~Why~~ Why were there not,
Among the generations before you,
Persons possessed of balanced ¹⁶¹⁹
Good sense, prohibiting (men)

وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا
إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

۱۱۳- وَلَا تَزَلُكُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ
النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
تَعْمَلُونَ لَا تَنْصُرُونَهُ

۱۱۴- وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفَى النَّهَارِ
وَزُلْفَىٰ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ
إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ
ذَٰلِكَ ذِكْرٌ لِلذَّكِّرِينَ

۱۱۵- وَاصْبِرْ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضَيِّعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

۱۱۶- فَلَوْلَا كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ
أُولُوا بَقِيَّةً يَنْهَوْنَ

1616. *The two ends of the day* : Morning and afternoon. The morning prayer is the *Fajr*, after the light is up but before sunrise : we thus get up betimes and begin the day with the remembrance of God and of our duty to Him, just as an ambassador might start on his journey after saluting his king and receiving his blessing. The early afternoon prayer, *Zuhr*, is immediately after noon : we are in the midst of our daily life, and again we remember God.

1617. *Approaches of the night* : *Zulafun*, plural of *Zulfatun*, an approach, something near at hand. As Arabic has, like Greek, a dual number distinct from the plural, and the plural number is used here, and not the dual, it is reasonable to argue that at least three "approaches of the night" are meant. The late afternoon prayer, *Iqr*, can be one of these three, and the evening prayer, *Magrib*, just after sunset, can be the second. The early night prayer, *Ishā*, at supper time when the glow of sunset is disappearing, would be the third of the "approaches of the night", when we commit ourselves to God before sleep. These are the five canonical prayers of Islam.

1618. "*Those things that are good*" : in this context the words refer primarily to prayers and sacred thoughts, but they include all good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. It is by them that we keep away everything that is evil, whether referring to the past, the present, or the future.

1619. *Baqiyat* : some virtue or faculty that stands assault and is lasting ; balanced good sense that stands firm to virtue and is not dazzled by the lusts and pleasures of this world, and is not deterred by fear from boldly condemning wrong if it was fashionable or customary. It is leaders possessed of such character that can save a nation from disaster or perdition. The scarcity of such leaders—and the rejection of the few who stood out—brought ruin among the nations whose example has already been set out to us as a warning.

In xi, 86 the word has a more literal meaning.

From mischief in the earth—
Except a few among them
Whom We saved (from harm)?¹⁶²⁰
But the wrong-doers pursued
The enjoyment of the good things
Of life which were given them,
And persisted in sin.

117. Nor would thy Lord be
The One to destroy
Communities for a single
wrong-doing,¹⁶²¹
If its members were likely
To mend.

118. If thy Lord had so willed,
He could have made mankind¹⁶²²
One People: but they
Will not cease to dispute,

119. Except those on whom He
Hath bestowed His Mercy:
And for this did He create
Them: and the Word
Of thy Lord shall be fulfilled:
"I will fill Hell with jinns
And men all together."¹⁶²³

عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
مِمَّنْ أَنْجَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ
وَالْجِنَّةَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا أُتِرُوا فِيهِ
وَكَانُوا فَجُورِينَ

۱۱۷- وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ
الْقَرْيَةَ بِظُلْمٍ
وَأَهْلِهَا مُصْلِحُونَ

۱۱۸- وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ الْكَاسَ أُمَّةً
وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَذَرُ الْوَنَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ

۱۱۹- إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ رَبُّكَ
وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ وَتَنَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ
لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ
وَالْكَاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

1620. The exceptional men of firm virtue would have been destroyed by the wicked to whom they were an offence, had they not been saved by the grace and mercy of God. Or perhaps, but for such grace, they might themselves have succumbed to the evil around them, or been overwhelmed in the general calamity.

1621. There are different shades of interpretation for this verse. I follow Baiḍawī in construing *zulm* here as "a single wrong". He thinks that the wrong referred to is *shirk*, or polytheism: God will not destroy for mere wrong belief if the conduct is right. I incline to interpret in more general terms. God is Long-Suffering and Oft-Forgiving: He is too Merciful to destroy for a single wrong, if there is any hope of reclaiming the wrong-doers to repentance and amendment or right life.

1622. Cf. x, 19. All mankind might have been one. But in God's Plan man was to have a certain measure of free-will, and this made differences inevitable. This would not have mattered if all had honestly sought God. But selfishness and moral wrong came in, and people's disputations became mixed up with hatred, jealousy, and sin, except in the case of those who accepted God's grace, which saved them. The object of their creation was to raise them up spiritually by God's grace. But if they will choose the path of evil and fall into sin, God's decree must be fulfilled, and His justice will take its course. In the course of that justice Hell will be filled with men and spirits, such is the number of those who go astray.

1623. Cf. vii, 18 and vii, 179. If Satan and his evil spirits tempt men from the path of rectitude, the responsibility of the tempted, who choose the path of evil, is no less than that of the tempters, and they will both be involved in punishment together.

120. All that we relate to thee
Of the stories of the apostles,—
With it We make firm
Thy heart: in them there cometh
To thee the Truth, as well as
An exhortation and a message
Of remembrance to those who
believe.¹⁶²⁴

۱۲۰-وَكُلًّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَقْبَامِ الرُّسُلِ
مَا بُيِّنَتْ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ
وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ
وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ○

121. Say to those who do not
Believe: "Do whatever ye can:
We shall do our part;"^{1624-A}

۱۲۱-وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ اعْمَلُوا
عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنَّا عَمِلُونَ ○

122. "And wait ye!
We too shall wait."¹⁶²⁵

۱۲۲-وَانتَظِرُوا إِنَّا مُنتَظِرُونَ ○

123. To God do belong
The unseen (secrets)
Of the heavens and the earth,
And to Him goeth back
Every affair (for decision):¹⁶²⁶
Then worship Him,
And put thy trust in Him:
And thy Lord is not
Unmindful of aught
That ye do.

۱۲۳-وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَالْأَنبَاءِ يُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ
كُلُّهُنَّ فَعِندَهُ
وَتُحْكَمُ عَلَيْهِ
وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ○



1624. The stories of the Prophets in the Qurān are not mere narratives or histories: they involve three things: (1) they teach the highest spiritual Truth; (2) they give advice, direction, and warning, as to how we should govern our lives, and (3) they awaken our conscience and recall to us the working of God's Law in human affairs. The story of Joseph in the next Sūra is an illustration in point.

1624-A. Cf. xi. 93 and vi. 135, n. 957. 'The worst that ye can do will not defeat God's Plan; and as for us who believe, our obvious duty is to do our part as taught to us by God's revelation.'

1625. Cf. xi. 93, n. 1595, and x. 102, n. 1484. If the wicked only wait, they will see how God's Plan unfolds itself. As for those who believe, they are glad to wait in perfect confidence, because they know that God is good and merciful, as well as just and true.

1626. Cf. ii. 210. There is nothing secret or open, in our world or in Creation, which does not depend ultimately on God's Will and Plan. Every affair goes back to Him for decision. Therefore we must worship Him and trust Him. Worship implies many things: e.g. (1) trying to understand His nature and His Will; (2) realising His goodness and glory, and His working in us, as a means to this end; (3) keeping Him in constant remembrance and celebrating His praise, to whom all praise is due; and (4) completely identifying our will with His, which means obedience to His Law, and service to Him and His creatures in all sincerity.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA XII (Yūsuf).

For the chronological place of this Sūra and the general argument of Sūras x. to xv. see Introduction to Sūra x.

In subject-matter this Sūra is entirely taken up with the story (recapitulated rather than told) of Joseph, the youngest (but one) of the twelve sons of the patriarch Jacob. The story is called the most beautiful of stories (xii. 3) for many reasons: (1) it is the most detailed of any in the Qurān; (2) it is full of human vicissitudes, and has therefore deservedly appealed to men and women of all classes; (3) it paints in vivid colours, with their spiritual implications, the most varied aspects of life—the patriarch's old age and the confidence between him and his little best-beloved son, the elder brothers' jealousy of this little son, their plot and their father's grief, the sale of the father's darling into slavery for a miserable little price, carnal love contrasted with purity and chastity, false charges, prison, the interpretation of dreams, low life and high life, Innocence raised to honour, the sweet "revenge" of Forgiveness and Benevolence, high matters of state and administration, humility in exaltation, filial love, and the beauty of Piety and Truth.

The story is similar to but not identical with the Biblical story; but the atmosphere is wholly different. The Biblical story is like a folk-tale in which morality has no place. Its tendency is to exalt the clever and financially-minded Jew against the Egyptian, and to explain certain ethnic and tribal peculiarities in later Jewish history. Joseph is shown as buying up all the cattle and the land of the poor Egyptians for the State under the stress of famine conditions, and making the Israelites "rulers" over Pharaoh's cattle. The Quranic story, on the other hand, is less a narrative than a highly spiritual sermon or allegory explaining the seeming contradictions in life, the enduring nature of virtue in a world full of flux and change, and the marvellous working of God's eternal purpose in His Plan as unfolded to us on the wide canvas of history. This aspect of the matter has been a favourite with Muslim poets and Sūfī exegetists, and is further referred to in Appendix VI (at the end of this Sūra), in connection with Jāmī's great Persian masterpiece, *Yūsuf-o-Zulāikhā*.

Summary.

Life is a dream and a vision, to be explained by stories and parables, as in the perspicuous Arabic Qurān. The truth, which Joseph the man of God saw in his vision, was unpalatable to his ten half-brothers, who plotted against him and sold him into slavery to a merchant for a few pieces of silver. (xii. 1-20, and C. 109.)

Joseph was taken by the merchant into Egypt, was bought by a great Egyptian court dignitary ('Azīz), who adopted him. The dignitary's wife sought, but in vain, to attract Joseph to the delights of earthly love. His resistance brought him disgrace and imprisonment, but he taught the truth even in prison and was known for his kindness. One of his fellow-prisoners, to whom he had interpreted a dream, was released and received into favour as the King's cup-bearer. (xii. 21-42, and C. 110.)

The King had a vision, which Joseph (through the cup-bearer) got an opportunity of explaining. Joseph insisted that all the scandal that had been raised about him should be publicly cleared. He was received into favour, and was appointed *wazīr*

by the King. His half-brothers (driven by famine) came to Egypt and were treated kindly by Joseph without their knowing his identity. He asks them to bring his full brother, the youngest son, Benjamin. (xii. 43-68, and C. 111.)

Joseph detains Benjamin and by a stratagem convicts his of their hatred and crime against himself, forgives them, and sends them to bring Jacob and the whole family from Canaan to Egypt. (xii. 69-93, and C. 112.)

Israel (Jacob) comes, is comforted, and settles in Egypt. The name of God is glorified. The truth of God endures for ever, and God's purpose is fully revealed in the Hereafter. (xii. 94-111, and C. 113).

C. 109.—Life and Wisdom are explained by Signs,

(xii. 1-20.) Symbols, Parables, and moving Stories,

In the Holy Qurān. A beautiful story

Is that of Joseph, the best-beloved son

Of Jacob. His future greatness

Was pre-figured in a vision, but his brother

Were filled with envy and hate: they plotted

To get rid of him and threw him down

Into a well. Some merchants found him,

Bound for Egypt. The brothers sold him

Into slavery for a few silver coins,—

Him the noblest man of his age,

Marked out by God for a destiny

Of greatness, righteousness, and benevolence.

Sūra XII.

Yusuf, or Joseph.

In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. **A. I. R.**¹⁶²⁷ These are
The Symbols¹⁶²⁸ (or Verses)
Of the Perspicuous Book.¹⁶²⁹
2. We have sent it down
As an Arabic Qurān,¹⁶³⁰
In order that ye may
Learn wisdom.
3. We do relate unto thee
The most beautiful of¹⁶³¹ stories,
In that We reveal to thee
This (portion of the) Qurān:
Before this, thou too
Wast among those
Who knew it not.
4. Behold, Joseph said
To his father: "Oh my father!¹⁶³²



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

١- الرَّبِّ

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ۝

٢- إِنْ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ۝

٣- نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ

بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ ۝

وَلَنْ نَكُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ۝

٤- إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ

1627. For the meaning of these mystic letters, see Introduction to S. x.

1628. *Āyāt*: Signs, Symbols, verses of the Qurān. The Symbolic meaning is particularly appropriate here, as the whole of Joseph's story is a Sign or a Miracle,—a wonder-working exposition of the Plan and Purpose of God.

1629. Cf. v 17, n. 716. The predominant meaning of *Alubīn* here is: one that explains or makes things clear.

1630. *Qur-ān* means: something (1) to be read, or (2) recited, or (3) proclaimed. It may apply to a verse, or a Sūra, or to the whole Book of Revelation.

1631. *Most beautiful of stories*: see Introduction to this Sūra. Eloquence consists in conveying by a word or hint many meanings for those who can understand and wish to learn wisdom. Not only is Joseph's story "beautiful" in that sense. Joseph himself was renowned for manly beauty: the women of Egypt, called him a noble angel (xii. 31), and the beauty of his exterior form was a symbol of the beauty of his soul. Moreover, the whole of the mystic meaning of Zulaikha's love for him centres round the theme, how beauty can be falsely worshipped in a sort of disguised self indulgence, contrasted with the growth of that true love of Beauty, which casts out Self and turns to the eternal Beauty of the Soul.

1632. For the Parable all that is necessary to know about Joseph is that he was one of the Chosen Ones of God. For the story it is necessary to set down a few more details. His father was Jacob, also called Israel, the son of Isaac, the younger son of Abraham, (the elder son having been Ismā'il, whose story is told in ii. 124-129). Abraham may be called the Father of the line of Semitic prophecy. Jacob had four wives. From three of them he had ten sons. In his old age he had from Rachel (Arabic *Rāḥīl*), a very beautiful woman, two sons Joseph and Benjamin (the youngest). At the time this story begins we may suppose that Joseph was about seventeen years of age. The place where Jacob and his family and his flocks were located was in Canaan, and is shown by tradition near modern Nāblūs (ancient Shechem), some thirty miles north of Jerusalem. The traditional site of the well into which Joseph was thrown by his brothers is still shown in the neighbourhood.

I did see eleven stars
And the sun and the moon :
I saw them prostrate themselves
To me ! " 1633

5. Said (the father) :
" My (dear) little son !
Relate not thy vision
To thy brothers, lest they
Concoct a plot against thee : 1634
For Satan is to man
An avowed enemy ! 1635

6. " Thus will thy Lord
Choose thee and teach thee
The interpretation of stories 1636
(and events)
And perfect His favour
To thee and to the posterity
Of Jacob—even as He
Perfected it to thy fathers
Abraham and Isaac aforetime !
For God is full of knowledge .
And wisdom." 1637

SECTION 2.

7. Verily in Joseph and his
brethren
Are Signs (or Symbols)

إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَ
الْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ ○

هـ - قَالَ يَبْنَى
لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَى إِخْوَتِكَ
فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا
إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ○
وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ
مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ
عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ يَعْقُوبُ كَمَاءً
اتَّعَمَّا عَلَى آبَائِكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَ
إِسْحَاقَ
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ع

هـ - لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٌ

1633. Joseph was a mere lad of seventeen. But he was true and frank and righteous; he was a type of manly beauty and rectitude. His father loved him dearly. His half-brothers were jealous of him and hated him. His destiny was pre-figured in the vision. He was to be exalted in rank above his eleven brothers (stars) and his father and mother (sun and moon), but as the subsequent story shows, he never lost his head, but always honoured his parents and repaid his brothers' craft and hatred with forgiveness and kindness.

1634. The young lad Yūsuf was innocent and did not even know of his brothers' guile and hatred, but the father knew and warned him.

1635. The story is brought up at once to its spiritual bearing. These wicked brothers were puppets in the hands of Evil. They allowed their manhood to be subjugated by Evil, not remembering that Evil was the declared opposite or enemy of the true nature and instincts of manhood.

1636. If Joseph was to be of the elect, he must understand and interpret Signs and events aright. The imagination of the pure sees truths, which those not so endowed cannot understand. The dreams of the righteous pre-figure great events, while the dreams of the futile are mere idle futilities. Even things that happen to us are often like dreams. The righteous man receives disasters and reverses, not with blasphemies against God, but with humble devotion, seeking to ascertain His Will. Nor does he receive good fortune with arrogance, but as an opportunity for doing good, to friends and foes alike. His attitude to histories and stories is the same: he seeks the edifying material which leads to God.

1637. Whatever happens is the result of God's Will and Plan. And He is good and wise, and He knows all things. Therefore we must trust Him. In Joseph's case he could look back to his fathers, and to Abraham, the True, the Righteous, who through all adversities kept his Faith pure and undaunted, and won through.

For Seekers (after Truth).¹⁶³⁸

8. They said: " Truly Joseph
And his brother are loved
More by our father than we :
But we are a goodly body !¹⁶³⁹
Really our father is obviously
Wandering (in his mind) !
9. " Slay ye Joseph or cast him out
To some (unknown) land,
That so the favour
Of your father may be
Given to you alone :
(There will be time enough)
For you to be righteous after
that ! " ¹⁶⁴⁰
10. Said one of them : " Slay not
Joseph, but if ye must
Do something, throw him down
To the bottom of the well :
He will be picked up
By some caravan of travellers. " ¹⁶⁴¹

الشاكسين
٨- إذ قالوا ليوسف وأخوه أحب
إلى أبينا منا ونحن عصبة
إني أبناك لنفئ ضليل مدين
٩- اقتلوا يوسف أو اطرحوه أرضا
نخل لكم وجه أبيكم
وتكونوا من بعده
توما صليحين
١٠- قال قائل منهم لا تقتلوا يوسف
والقوه في غيبت الحب لتلقوه بعض
السيارة إن كنتم فاعلين

1638. In Joseph's story we have good and evil contrasted in so many different ways. Those in search of true spiritual knowledge can see it embodied in concrete events in this story of many facets, matching the colours of Joseph's many-coloured coat.

1639. The ten brothers not only envied and hated their innocent younger brothers Joseph and Benjamin. They despised and dishonoured their father as an ignorant old fool,—in his dotage. In reality Jacob had the wisdom to see that his young and innocent sons wanted protection and to perceive Joseph's spiritual greatness. But his wisdom, to them, was folly or madness or imbecility, because it touched their self-love, as truth often does. And they relied on the brute strength of numbers—the ten hefty brethren against old Jacob, the lad Joseph, and the boy Benjamin!

1640. There seems to be some irony here, consistent with the cynical nature of these callous, worldly-wise brethren. The goodness of Joseph was a reproach to their own wickedness. Perhaps the grieved father contrasted Joseph against them, and sometimes spoke of it: "Why don't you be good like Joseph?" This was gall and wormwood to them. Real goodness was to them nothing but a name. Perhaps it only suggested hypocrisy to them. So they plotted to get rid of Joseph. In their mean hearts they thought that would bring back their father's love whole to them. But they valued that love only for what material good they could get out of it. On the other hand their father was neither impartial or unjustly partial. He only knew the difference between good and dross. They say in irony, "Let us first get rid of Joseph. It will be time enough then to pretend to be 'good' like him, or to repent of our crime after we have had all its benefits in material things!"

1641. One of the brethren, perhaps less cruel by nature, or perhaps more worldly-wise, said: "Why undertake the risk of blood-guiltiness? Throw him into the well you see there! Some travellers passing by will pick him up and remove him to a far country. If not, at least we shall not have killed him." This was false casuistry, but such casuistry appeals to sinners of a certain kind of temperament. The well was apparently a dry well, deep enough to prevent him coming out, but with no water in which he could be drowned. 'It was God's Plan to save him alive, but not to make Joseph indebted to any of his brethren for his life!

11. **And** they said: "Oh our father!
Why dost thou not
Trust us with Joseph,—
Seeing we are indeed
His sincere well-wishers?" 1643

12. "Send him with us to-morrow
To enjoy himself and play,
And we shall take
Every care of him." 1643

13. (Jacob) said: "Really
It saddens me that ye
Should take him away:
I fear lest the wolf
Should devour him
While ye attend not 1644
To him."

14. They said: "If the wolf
Were to devour him
While we are (so large) a party,
Then should we indeed
(First) have perished
ourselves!" 1645

15. **So** they did take him away,
And they all agreed

١١- قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا
مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْتَمُنَا عَلَى يُوسُفَ
وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَصِاحُونَ ○

١٢- أَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَزْتَرُ وَيَلْعَبُ
وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَحْفُظُونَ ○

١٣- قَالَ إِنِّي لَخَشِيفٌ أَنْ تُدْهَبُوا بِهِ
وَإِخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ
وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ ○

١٤- قَالُوا لَئِنْ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ
وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ
إِنَّا إِذَا لَخَاسِرُونَ ○

١٥- فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوا بِهِ وَاجْتَمَعُوا

1642. The plot having been formed, the brethren proceed to put it into execution. Jacob, knowing the situation, did not ordinarily trust his beloved Joseph with the brethren. The latter therefore remonstrate and feign brotherly affection

1643. They did not expect their protestations to be believed in. But they added an argument that might appeal both to Jacob and Joseph. 'They were going to give their young brother a good time. Why not let him come out with them and play and enjoy himself to his heart's content?'

1644. Jacob did not know the precise plot, but he had strong misgivings. But how could he put off these brethren? If they were driven to open hostility, they would be certain to cause him harm. He must deal with the brethren wisely and cautiously. He pleaded that he was an old man, and would miss Joseph and be sad without him. And after all, Joseph was not of an age to play with them. They would be attending to their own affairs, and a wolf might come and attack and kill Joseph. In saying this he was really unwillingly giving a cue to the wicked ones, for they use that very excuse in verse 17 below. Thus the wicked plot thickens, but there is a counter-plan also, which is drawing a noose of lies round the wicked ones, so that they are eventually driven into a corner, and have to confess their own guilt in verse 91 below, and through repentance obtain forgiveness.

1645. Jacob's objections as stated could be easily rebutted, and the brethren did so. They would be eleven in the party, and the ten strong and grown-up men would have to perish before the wolf could touch the young lad Joseph! So they prevailed, as verbal arguments are apt to prevail, when events are weaving their web on quite another Plan which has nothing to do with verbal arguments. Presumably Benjamin was too young to go with them.

To throw him down
To the bottom of the well :
And We put into his heart¹⁶⁴⁶
(This Message) : 'Of a surety
Thou shalt (one day)
Tell them the truth
Of this their affair
While they know (thee) not'...¹⁶⁴⁷

16. When they came
To their father
In the early part
Of the night,
Weeping.¹⁶⁴⁸

17. They said : " Oh our father !
We went racing with one
another,¹⁶⁴⁹
And left Joseph with our things ;
And the wolf devoured him...
But thou wilt never believe us
Even though we tell the truth."¹⁶⁵⁰

18. They stained his shirt¹⁶⁵¹
With false blood. He said :

أَنْ يَجْعَلُوهُ فِي غَيْبَتِ الْحُبِّ
وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَهُمْ
بَأَمْرِهِمْ هَذَا
وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ٥

١٦- وَجَاءُوا أَبَاهُمْ
عِشَاءً يَبْكُونَ ٥

١٧- قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ
وَتَرَكْنَا يُوسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِنَا فَأَكَلَهُ
الذِّئْبُ ۖ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَّنَا
وَلَوْ كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ ٥

١٨- وَجَاءَهُ عَلَى قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ

1646. God was with Joseph in all his difficulties, sorrows, and sufferings, as He is with all His servants who put their trust in Him. The poor lad was betrayed by his brothers, and left, perhaps to die or to be sold into slavery. But his heart was undaunted. His courage never failed him. On the contrary he had an inkling, a presentiment, of things that were to be—that his own rectitude and beauty of soul would land him on his feet, and perhaps some day, his brothers would stand in need of him, and he would be in a position to fulfil that need, and would do it gladly, putting them to shame for their present plotting and betrayal of him.

1647. This situation actually occurred when Joseph later on became the governor of Egypt and his brothers stood before him suing for his assistance although they did not know that he was their betrayed brother; see xii 89 below; also xii. 58.

1648. The plotters were ready with their false tale for their father, but in order to make it appear plausible, they came some time after sundown, to show that they had made an effort to search for their brother and save him.

1649. They wanted to make out that they were not negligent of Joseph. They were naturally having games and exercise, while the boy was left with their belongings. It was the racing that prevented them from seeing the wolf. And Jacob's fears about the wolf (xii 13 above) made them imagine that he would swallow the wolf story readily.

1650. They were surprised that Jacob received the story about the wolf with cold incredulity. So they grow petulant, put on an air of injured innocence, and bring out the blood-stained garment described in the next verse.

1651. Joseph wore a garment of many colours, described in Persian as a *qabā bū-qalamūn*. This was itself allegorical of the wonderful changes of fortune which Joseph underwent in his life. This was a special garment peculiar to Joseph. If the brethren could produce it blood-stained before their father, they thought he would be convinced that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast. But the stain on the garment was a stain of "false blood",—not the blood of Joseph, but the blood of a goat which the brethren had killed expressly for this purpose,

"Nay, but your minds
Have made up a tale
(That may pass) with you.¹⁶⁵²
(For me) patience is most fitting:
Against that which ye assert,
It is God (alone)
Whose help can be sought"...

19. **Then** there came a caravan¹⁶⁵³
Of travellers: they sent
Their water-carrier (for water),
And he let down his bucket
(Into the well)... He said:
"Ah there! Good news!"¹⁶⁵⁴
Here is a (fine) young man!"
So they concealed him¹⁶⁵⁵
As a treasure! But God
Knoweth well all that they do!¹⁶⁵⁶

20. The (Brethren) sold him
For a miserable price,—

قَالَ
بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً
فَصَبِرْ جَمِيلٌ
وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ
١-وَجَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ
فَأَرْسَلُوا وَارِدَهُمْ فَأَدْلَى دَلْوَةً
قَالَ يَبْنَؤُى هَذَا عُلْمٌ
وَأَسْرُوءُ بِضَاعَةٍ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ

٢-وَشَرَّوُهُ بِثَمِينٍ

1652. Jacob saw that there had been some foul play, and he did not hesitate to say so. In effect he said: "Ah me! the tale you tell may be good enough for you, who invented it! But what about me, your aged father? What is there left in life for me now, with my beloved son gone? And yet what can I do but hold my heart in patience and implore God's assistance? I have faith, and I know that all that He does is for the best!"

1653. Then comes the caravan of unknown travellers—Midianite or Arab merchants travelling to Egypt with merchandise, such as the balm of Gilead in Trans-Jordan. In accordance with custom the caravan was preceded by advance parties to search out water and pitch a camp near. They naturally went to the well and let down their bucket. To their surprise the well was dry, but a handsome youth got into the bucket and came out in it when they hauled up the bucket!

1654. The water-carrier is surprised and taken aback, when his bucket brings up, not water, but a youth of comely appearance, innocent like an angel, with a face as bright as the sun! What is he to make of it? Anyhow, to see him is a delight! And he shouts it out as a piece of good news. Some Commentators think that "*Bushrā*", the Arabic word for "Good news", is a proper noun, the name of the companion to whom he shouted.

1655. It was a caravan of merchants, and they think of everything in terms of the money to be made out of it! Here was an unknown, unclaimed youth, of surpassing beauty, with apparently a mind as refined as was his external beauty. If he could be sold in the opulent slave markets of Memphis or whatever was the capital of the Hyksos Dynasty then ruling in Egypt (see Appendix IV following S. vii.), what a price he would fetch! They had indeed lighted upon a treasure! And they wanted to conceal him lest he was another's slave and had run away from his master who might come and claim him! The circumstances were peculiar and the merchants were cautious. *Biḥāʾat*=stock-in-trade; capital; money; wealth; treasure.

1656. To different minds the situation appeared different. Joseph must have felt keenly the edge of his brethren's treason. His father Jacob was lost in the sorrow of the loss of his best-beloved son. The brethren were exulting in their plan of getting rid of one whom they hated. The merchants were gloating over their gains. But the horizon of all was limited. God knew their deeds and their feelings and motives, and He was working out His own Plan. Neither the best of us nor the worst of us know whither our Destiny is leading us—how evil plots are defeated and goodness comes to its own in marvellous ways!

For a few dirhams¹⁶⁵⁷ counted out :
 In such low estimation
 Did they hold him !¹⁶⁵⁸

بَحْسَ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُودَةً
 وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الزَّاهِدِينَ

C. 110.—Joseph was bought by a man high at Court
 (xli. 21-42.) In Egypt, who asked his wife Zulaikhā
 To treat him with honour, with a view
 To his adoption as a son. But she burnt
 With a passion of earthly love for him.
 When Joseph refused to yield to her solicitations,
 There was trouble and scandal, and Joseph
 Had to go to prison. Here were shown
 His greatness, and kindness, and wisdom.
 The King's cup-bearer came in disgrace
 To prison. Joseph instructed him and others
 In the eternal Gospel of Unity. When released
 And restored to favour, the cup-bearer
 Forgot Joseph—for a time,—until
 It pleased God to put into Joseph's hands
 The keys of the prosperity of Egypt and the world.

SECTION 3.

21. The man in Egypt¹⁶⁵⁹
 Who bought him, said

وَقَالَ الَّذِي اشْتَرَاهُ مِنْ مِصْرَ

1657. *Dirham*; from Greek, *drachma*, a small silver coin, which varied in weight and value at different times and in different States. On the whole, it may be taken to have been a value varying from about 6d. or 8d. to 10d. or 12d. in sterling, or say a quarter-rupee to a half-rupee.

1658. There was mutual deceit on both sides. The Brethren had evidently been watching to see what happened to Joseph: when they saw the merchants take him up and hide him, they came to claim his price as a run-away slave, but dared not haggle over the price, lest their object, to get rid of him, should be defeated. The merchants were shrewd enough to doubt the claim in their own minds: but they dared not haggle lest they should lose a very valuable acquisition. And so the most precious of human lives in that age was sold into slavery for a few shillings!

1659. Joseph is now clear of his jealous brethren in the land of Canaan. The merchants take him to Egypt. In the city of Memphis (or whatever was the Egyptian capital then) he was exposed for sale by the merchants. The merchants had not miscalculated. There was a ready market for him: his handsome presence, his winning ways, his purity and innocence, his intelligence and integrity, combined with his courtesy and nobility, attracted all eyes to him. There was the keenest competition to purchase him, and in the highest Court circles. Every competitor was outbid by a high court official, who is called in verse 30 below "the 'Aziz" (the Exalted in rank). Who was he? He was probably a eunuch. The highest court officials in ancient Egypt were eunuchs. So much was this the case that the term "court officer", and "eunuch" became practically synonymous (E. B., viii. 14). The 'Aziz, we may assume, was a eunuch, and childless. His wife, whom our tradition calls Zulaikhā, was only nominally a wife. She was a virgin. Our poetical tradition says that she was a princess of the West who saw Joseph in a dream first and fell in love with him. As her dream told her that her beloved was the wazir of Egypt, her father arranged a match for her with the wazir, neither of the parties having seen the other. While, therefore, she nominally passed as the 'Aziz's wife she secretly cherished her romantic unknown love until Joseph appeared on the scene. It was natural that the 'Aziz should want to adopt Joseph as his son, and he asked Zulaikhā to mother him and treat him as an honoured member of the household.

To his wife : " Make his stay
(Among us) honourable : ¹⁶⁶⁰
Maybe he will bring us
Much good, or we shall
Adopt him as a son."
Thus did We establish
Joseph in the land, ¹⁶⁶¹
That we might teach him
The interpretation of stories ¹⁶⁶²
(And events). And God
Hath full power and control
Over His affairs; but most
Among mankind know it not. ¹⁶⁶³

لَا مَرَاتِبَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ
مَثْوَاهُ عَلَى أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا
أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا
وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ
وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَى أَمْرِهِ
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ
۝
۲۲- وَلَئِنَّا لَبَلَّغُوهُ أَشَدَّهُ اتِّبَانًا

22. When Joseph attained ¹⁶⁶⁴
His full manhood, We gave him

1660. See last note. The 'Aziz's motive was perhaps worldly. Such a handsome, attractive, intelligent son would get him more honour, dignity, power, and wealth. But Zulaikha had other feelings. Joseph was the man of her dreams! She had yet to purify her earthly passion, and to learn the true meaning of pure, spiritual love, before she could be worthy of Joseph.

1661. How unerringly God's plan works! To teach Joseph wisdom and power, he had to be tested and proved in righteousness, and advanced and established in Egypt, so that Zulaikha should be tested and purified of her dross, the women and men of Egypt should have a glimpse of God's Message, and the way prepared for Israel and his posterity to proclaim God's truth to the world and to make possible the subsequent missions of Moses and Muḥammad.

1662. *Aḥādith* might be stories, things imagined or related, things that happened, in life or in true dreams. To suppose that phenomenal events are the only reality is a mark of one-sided materialism. As Hamlet said to Horatio, "there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." External events have their own limited reality, but there are bigger realities behind them, that sometimes appear darkly in the visions of ordinary men, but more clearly in the visions of poets, seers, sages, and prophets. Joseph had to be trained in seeing the realities behind events and visions. He was hated by his brothers and sold by them into slavery; they were sending him into the land of Egypt, where he was to rule men. He loved his father dearly and was separated from him, and his mother had died early: but his affection was not blunted, but drawn to a keener edge when his benevolent work benefited millions in Egypt, and in the world. His own vision of stars, sun, and moon prostrating themselves before him, was no idle dream of a selfish fool, but the prefigurement of a power, which, used rightly, was to make his own honour an instrument of service to millions he had not seen, through men and women whose own power and dignity were sanctified through him. He was to understand the hidden meaning of what seemed futilities, blunderings, snares, evil plottings, love gone wrong, and power used tyrannically. He was to interpret truth to those who would never have reached it otherwise.

1663. Cf. "There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will." Only, in Shakespeare, we have a vague and distant ideal, an irresolute striving, an unsuccessful attempt at getting beyond "this too, too solid flesh"! In Joseph we have the man of God, sure in faith, above all carnal motives, and advancing the destiny of mankind with a conscious purpose, as the scroll of knowledge, wisdom, and power, unfolds itself before him by the grace of God, All-Good and All-Powerful.

1664. When Joseph left Canaan, he was a young and immature lad of seventeen or eighteen but his nature was innocent and good. Through the vicissitudes of his fortune in Egypt, he grew in knowledge, judgment and power.

Power and knowledge: thus do We
Reward those who do right.¹⁶⁶⁵

23. But she in whose house
He was, sought to seduce him¹⁶⁶⁶
From his (true) self: she fastened
The doors, and said:
"Now come, thou (dear one)!"
He said: "God forbid!
Truly (thy husband) is
My lord! he made
My sojourn agreeable!
Truly to no good
Come those who do wrong!"¹⁶⁶⁷

24. And (with passion) did she
Desire him, and he would
Have desired her, but that
He saw the evidence¹⁶⁶⁸
Of his Lord: thus
(Did We order) that We¹⁶⁶⁹
Might turn away from him
(All) evil and shameful deeds:

حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَلِكَ نُجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

٢٣- وَكَادَتْهُ الْغِيءُ مَوْفَى بَيْنِهَا عَنِ
نَفْسِهِ
وَعَلَقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ
وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ
قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّكَ رِئَیَ أَحْسَنَ مَنَآئِیْ
إِنَّكَ لَا یُعْلِمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

٢٤- وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا
لَوْلَا أَنَّ رَأْبُهَا رَأَتْهُ
كَذَلِكَ لَنَصْرَفَتْ عَنْهُ
الشَّوْءَ وَالْفُتْنَاءَ

1665. *Al-muhsinîn*: those who do right, those who do good. Both ideas are implied. In following right conduct, you are necessarily doing good to yourself and to others. Joseph's resistance to Zulaikha's carnal love advanced her herself to a glimpse of true spiritual love.

1666. Zulaikha's true position is indicated in n. 1659 above. She loved much but her love was yet earthly, and was therefore unworthy of her and of Joseph. He had already been purified, but she was yet to be purified. Hence the conflict. However nominal her tie to her husband may have been, it was brought about by her own mistaken act, and she was bound to respect that tie and not to flout it, as her merely earthly passion impelled her to do. Not only in this was she guilty. The 'Azz had treated Joseph with honour: he was more his guest and son than his slave. In trying to seduce Joseph in these circumstances, she was guilty of a crime against Joseph's own honour and dignity. And there was a third fault in her earthly love. True love blots Self out: it thinks more of the loved one than of the Self. Zulaikha was seeking the satisfaction of her own selfish passion, and was in treason against Joseph's pure soul and his high destiny. It was inevitable that Joseph should repel her advances.

1667. Joseph's plea in rejecting Zulaikha's love is threefold: (1) I owe a duty, and so do you, to your husband, the 'Azz; (2) the kindness, courtesy, and honour, with which he has treated me entitle him to more than mere gratitude from me; (3) in any case, do you not see that you are harbouring a guilty passion, and that no good can come out of guilt? We must all obey laws, human and divine.'

1668. She was blinded with passion, and his plea had no effect on her. He was human after all, and her passionate love and her beauty placed a great temptation in his path. But he had a sure refuge,—his faith in God. His spiritual eyes saw something that her eyes, blinded by passion, did not see. She thought no one saw when the doors were closed. He knew that God was there and everywhere. That made him strong, and proof against temptation.

1669. The credit of our being saved from sin is due, not to our weak earthly nature, but to God. We can only try, like Joseph, to be true and sincere; God will purify us and save us from all that is wrong. Tempted but true, we rise above ourselves.

For he was one of Our servants,
Sincere and purified.

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ ○

25. So they both raced each other
To the door, and she
Tore his shirt from the back: ¹⁶⁷⁰
They both found her lord
Near the door. She said:
"What is the (fitting) punishment
For one who formed
An evil design against
Thy wife, but prison
Or a grievous chastisement?" ¹⁶⁷¹

٢٥-وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ
وَقَدَّتْ قَيْصَصَهُ مِنْ دُبُرٍ
وَأَلْفَيْتَا سَيْدَهَا لَدَا الْبَابِ
قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا
إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ○

26. He said: "It was she
That sought to seduce me—¹⁶⁷²
From my (true) self." And one
Of her household saw (this)
And bore witness, (thus):—¹⁶⁷³
"If it be that his shirt
Is rent from the front, then
Is her tale true,
And he is a liar!"

٢٦-قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدَتْنِي عَنْ نَفْسِي
وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا
إِنْ كَانَ قَيْصَصُهُ قَدْ مِنْ قَبِيلٍ
فَصَدَقَتْ
وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَذَّابِينَ ○

27. "But if it be that his shirt
Is torn from the back,

٢٧-وَإِنْ كَانَ قَيْصَصُهُ قَدْ مِنْ دُبُرٍ

1670. With Zulaikhā in her mad passion, the situation became intolerable, and Joseph made for the door. Zulaikhā ran after him to detain him. She tugged at his garment to detain him. As he was retreating, she could only catch hold of the back of his shirt, and in the struggle she tore it. He was determined to open the door and leave the place, as it was useless to argue with her in her mad passion. When the door was opened, it so happened that the 'Aziz was not far off. We need not assume that he was spying, or had any suspicions either of Zulaikhā or Joseph. In his narrow limited way he was a just man. We can imagine Zulaikhā's consternation. One guilt leads to another. She had to resort to a lie, not only to justify herself but also to have her revenge on the man who had scorned her love. Slighted love (of the physical kind) made her ferocious, and she lost all sense of right and wrong.

1671. Her lie and her accusation were plausible. Joseph was found with his dress disarranged. She wanted the inference to be drawn that he had assaulted her and she had resisted. For one in his position it was a dreadful crime. Should he not be consigned to a dungeon or at least scourged? Perhaps she hoped that in either case he would be more pliable to her designs in the future.

1672. Joseph bore himself with dignity. He was too great and noble to indulge in angry recrimination. But he had to tell the truth. And he did it with quiet simplicity, without argument or bitterness,—and not caring whether he was believed or not. 'The love game was hers, not his, and it went too far in seeking to assault his person.'

1673. In the nature of things there was no eye-witness to what had happened between them. But as there was a scene and the whole household collected, wisdom came through one who was not immediately concerned. They say it was a child. If so, it illustrates the truth that the most obvious things are not noticed by people who are excited, but are plain to simple people who remain calm. Wisdom comes often through babes and sucklings.

Then is she the liar,
And he is telling the truth ! " 1674

28. So when he saw his shirt,—
That it was torn at the back,—
(Her husband) said : " Behold !
It is a snare of you women ! " 1675
Truly, mighty is your snare !

29. " Oh Joseph, pass this over !
(Oh wife), ask forgiveness
For thy sin, for truly
Thou hast been at fault ! " 1676

SECTION 4.

30. *Aradies* said in the City :
" The wife of the (great) 'Aziz 1677
Is seeking to seduce her slave
From his (true) self :
Truly hath he inspired her
With violent love : we see
She is evidently going astray. " 1678

كَذَّكَتْ وَهِيَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ○

٢٨- فَلَمَّا رَأَى قَبِيضَهُ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ

قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ كَيْدِكُنَّ

إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ ○

٢٩- يُوسُفُ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ هَذَا وَاسْتَغْفَرَ

لِذُنُوبِهِ إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ ○

٣٠- وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ

تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا

حُبًّا إِنَّا لَنَرِيهَا فِي صِلَىٰ مُيَمِّيْنٍ ○

1674. If Joseph's shirt was torn at the back, he must obviously have been retreating, and Zulaikha must have been tugging from behind. No one could doubt who was the guilty party. Everybody saw it, and the 'Aziz was convinced.

1675. When the real fact became clear to every one, the 'Aziz as head of the household had to decide what to do. His own position was difficult, and it was made ridiculous. He was a high officer of state, say Grand Chamberlain. He was a eunuch. His dignity and rank were advanced by the so-called marriage with a high-born Princess. Was he going to proclaim to the world that Zulaikha was running after a slave? He was probably fond of her, and he saw the innocence, loyalty, and sterling merit of Joseph. He must treat the whole affair as a woman's prank,—the madness of sex-love, and the tricks and snares connected with sex-love. He must take no further action but to rate his wife and do justice to Joseph.

1676. As was only fair, he apologised to Joseph and begged him to give no further thought to the injury that had been done to him, first by the love-snare of one who was called his wife, secondly, by the utterly false charge made against him, and thirdly, by the scene, which must have been painful to a man of such spotless character as Joseph. That was not enough. He must ask Zulaikha humbly to beg Joseph's pardon for the wrong that she had done him. And he must further ask Zulaikha to consider her unbecoming conduct in itself, apart from any wrong done to Joseph. Probably Zulaikha's thoughts about this must have been bitter. What did the 'Aziz know of the burning furnace of sex-hunger? "He jests at scars who never felt a wound!"

1677. 'Aziz: title of a nobleman or officer of Court, of high rank. Considering all the circumstances, the office of Grand Chamberlain or minister may be indicated. But "'Aziz" I think is a title, not an office. I have not translated the title but left it as it is. "Excellency" or "Highness" would have specialised modern associations which I want to avoid.

1678. The 'Aziz's just, wise, and discreet conduct would have closed the particular episode of Zulaikha's guilty conduct if only Mrs. Grundy had left her alone and she had not foolishly thought of justifying her conduct to Mrs. Grundy. The 'Aziz had reproved her, and he had the right and authority so to do. He also probably understood her. Joseph by his behaviour had upheld the highest standard both for himself and for her. Perhaps, her lower love having been foiled, she was trying to search within herself, and reach out after that higher love which does not indulge the Self, but suffers all things in silence, in order that constancy might make her worthy of even the thought of Joseph. But the tongues of the throng about her must wag, and she had not been sufficiently schooled to despise their malice and their invective. They knew nothing of the secret history of her heart or the true position and teaching of Joseph. Stung by their malevolent motives, she tried to justify herself to them by a stratagem, and she fell another stage below the self-sacrifice of true spiritual love!

31. When (Zulaikha) heard
Of their malicious talk,
She sent for them
And prepared a banquet ¹⁶⁷⁹
For them : she gave
Each of them a knife :
And she said (to Joseph),
" Come out before them."
When they saw him,
They did extol him,
And (in their amazement)
Cut their hands : they said,
" God preserve us ! no mortal
Is this ! This is none other
Than a noble angel !"

٣١- فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ
وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُثَاقًا
وَاتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا
وَقَالَتْ أَخْرِجِي عَلَيْهِنَّ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ
وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ
وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا
إِذَا هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ ○

32. She said : " There before you
Is the man about whom
Ye did blame me !
I did seek to seduce him from
His (true) self but he did
Firmly save himself guiltless !... ¹⁶⁸⁰
And now, if he doth not
My bidding, he shall certainly
Be cast into prison,
And (what is more)
Be in the company of the vilest !"

٣٢- قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ
وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ
فَاسْتَعْصَمَ
وَلَكِن لَّمْ يَفْعَلْ مَا امْرَأَةٌ يُسَبِّحُ
وَلَيَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

1679. When her reputation began to be pulled to pieces by Mrs. Grundy, with sundry exaggerations and distortions and malicious inuendos, Zulaikhā invited all ladies in society to a grand banquet. We can imagine them reclining at ease after the manner of fashionable banquets. When dessert was reached and the talk flowed freely about the gossip and scandal which made their hostess interesting, they were just about to cut the fruit with their knives, when, behold ! Joseph was brought into their midst. Imagine the consternation which his beauty caused, and the havoc it played with their hearts ! " Ah ! ", thought Zulaikhā, " now is your hypocrisy self-exposed ! What about your reproaches to me ? You have yourselves so lost your self-control that you have cut your own fingers ! "

1680. Zulaikhā's speech is subtle, and shows that any repentance or compunction she may have felt is blotted out by the collective crowd mentality into which she has deliberately invited herself to fall. Her speech falls into two parts, with a hiatus between, which I have marked by the punctuation mark (...). In the first part there is a note of triumph, as much as to say, " Now you see ! mine was no vulgar passion ! you are just as susceptible ! you would have done the same thing ! " Finding encouragement from their passion and their fellow feeling, she openly avows as a woman amongst women (by a sort of freemasonry) what she would have been ashamed to acknowledge to others before. She falls a step lower and boasts of it. A step lower still, and she sneers at Joseph's innocence, his firmness in saving himself guiltless ! There is a pause. The tide of passion rises still higher, and the dreadful second part of her speech begins. It is a sort of joint consultation, though she speaks in monologue. The women all agree that no man has a right to resist their solicitations. Beauty spurned is the highest crime. And so now Zulaikhā rises to the height of tragic guilt and threatens Joseph. She forgets all her finer feeling, her real love, and is overpowered by brute passion. After all, he is a slave and must obey his mistress ! Or, there is prison, and the company of the vilest, instead of the caresses of beauty and fashion in high places ! " Poor, deluded, fallen Zulaikhā ! She sank lower than herself, in seeking the support of the crowd around her ! What pain and suffering and sorrow can expiate the depth of this crime ? "

33. He said: "Oh my Lord!
The prison is more
To my liking than that
To which they invite me: ¹⁶⁸¹
Unless Thou turn away.
Their snare from me,
I should (in my youthful folly)
Feel inclined towards them.
And join the ranks of the
ignorant." ¹⁶⁸²

34. So his Lord heard him
(In his prayer), and turned
Away from him their snare: ¹⁶⁸³
Verily He heareth and knoweth
(All things).

35. When it occurred to the men, ¹⁶⁸⁴
After they had seen the Signs,
(That it was best)
To imprison him
For a time.

٣٣- قَالَ رَبِّ
الْيَسْبُحُنْ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ دُعَايَ عَوْنَتِي إِلَيْهِ
وَالْأَنْصَرَفُ عَنِّي
كَيْدَهُنَّ أَضْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ
وَأَكُنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ○

٣٤- فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ
فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ
إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ○

٣٥- ثُمَّ بَدَأَ إِلَهُمُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا رَأَوْا الْآيَاتِ
لِيَسْجُدَّ لَهُ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ○

سج

1681. "To which they invite me." Notice it is now "they" not "she". Where there was the snare of one woman before, it is now the collective snare of many women,—of womankind!

1682. Joseph's speech is characteristic. Like a true man of God, he takes refuge in God. He knows the weakness of human nature. He would not pit his own strength against the whole assault of evil. He will rely on God to turn evil away from him, and praise Him alone for any success he achieves in his fight. It is only the ignorant who do not know man's weakness and God's strength!

1683. Joseph was saved from the wiles of the women, which would have degraded him. But more, his truth and character were completely vindicated in the eyes of all concerned by the avowal of Zulaikha.

1684. When Joseph's character was completely vindicated, there was no disgrace to him in being sent to prison after that. On the contrary the blame now would attach to those who for their own selfish motives restricted his liberty for a time. As a matter of fact various motives on the part of the many actors in this divine drama converged towards that end. For Joseph prison was better than the importunities of the women, and now, not one woman, but all society women were after him. To the women themselves it looked as if that was a lever which they could use to force his compliance. Vain, deluded creatures, to think that a man of God could be forced from the path of rectitude by threats or bribes. To the 'Aziz it appeared as if it might be in Zulaikha's best interests that he should disappear from her view in prison. The decisive factor was the view of the men generally, who were alarmed at the consternation he had caused among the women. They knew that Joseph was righteous: they had seen the Signs of God in his wonderful personality and his calm and confident fortitude. But, it was argued, it was better that one man (even if righteous) should suffer in prison rather than that many should suffer from the extraordinary disturbance he was unwittingly causing in their social life. Not for the first nor for the last time did the righteous suffer plausibly for the guilt of the guilty. And so Joseph went to prison—for a time

SECTION 5.

36. Now with him there came
 Into the prison two young men.¹⁶⁸⁵
 Said one of them: "I see
 Myself (in a dream)
 Pressing wine." Said the other:
 "I see myself (in a dream)
 Carrying bread on my head,
 And birds are eating thereof."¹⁶⁸⁶
 "Tell us" (they said) "the truth
 And meaning thereof: for we
 See thou art one
 That doth good (to all)." ¹⁶⁸⁷

٣٦- وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيْنِ
 قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا لِيْ أَرَأَيْتِ أَصْغِرُ خَمْرًا
 وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ لِيْ أَرَأَيْتِ أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ
 رَأْسِيْ خُبْزًا تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ
 نَبِّئْنَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ
 إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ○

37. He said: "Before any food
 Comes (in due course)
 To feed either of you,
 I will surely reveal
 To you the truth
 And meaning of this
 Ere it come to pass: ¹⁶⁸⁸
 That is part of the (Duty)
 Which my Lord hath taught
 me.¹⁶⁸⁹
 I have (I assure you)

٣٧- قَالَ لَا يَأْتِيكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُزْرَقَانِهِ
 إِلَّا نَبَّأْتُكُمَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ
 قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمَا
 ذَلِكُمْ مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي رَبِّيْ

1685. Now opens another chapter in Joseph's life. The Plan of God develops. The wicked might plot: the weak might be swayed by specious arguments: but everything is used by the Universal Plan for its own beneficent purposes. Joseph must get into touch with Pharaoh, in order to work out the salvation of Egypt, and yet it must be through no obligation to smaller men. And he must diffuse his personality and teach the truth to men of all sorts in prison.

1686. Two men came to the prison about the same time as Joseph. They were both apparently officers of the king (the Pharaoh), who had incurred his wrath. One was a cup-bearer (or butler or chief steward) whose duty was to prepare the king's wines and drinks. The other was the king's baker, whose duty was to prepare the king's bread. They were both in disgrace. The former dreamed that he was again carrying on his duties and pressing wine: the latter that he was carrying bread, but it did not reach his master, for the birds ate of it.

1687. Both these men saw the Signs of God about Joseph. They felt not only that he had wisdom, but that he was kind and benevolent, and would give of his wisdom even to strangers like themselves. They therefore told him their dreams and asked him to interpret them.

1688. The dream of one foreboded good to him, and of the other, evil to him. It was good that each should prepare for his fate. But Joseph's mission was far higher than that of merely foretelling events. He must teach the truth of God and the faith in the Hereafter to both men. He does that first before he talks of the events of their phenomenal life. And yet he does it so tenderly. He does not tantalise them. In effect he says, "You shall learn everything before our next meal, but let me first teach you Faith!"

1689. Joseph does not preach a pompous sermon, or claim any credit to himself for placing himself at their service. He is just doing his duty, and the highest good he can do to them is to teach them Faith.

Abandoned the ways
Of a people that believe not
In God and that (even)
Deny the Hereafter.¹⁶⁹⁰

38. "And I follow the ways¹⁶⁹¹
Of my fathers,—Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob; and never
Could we attribute any partners
Whatever to God: that (comes)
Of the grace of God to us
And to mankind: yet
Most men are not grateful.

39. "Oh my two companions¹⁶⁹²
Of the prison! (I ask you):
Are many lords differing
Among themselves better,
Or the One God,
Supreme and Irresistible?

40. "If not Him, ye worship nothing
But names which ye have
named,—¹⁶⁹³
Ye and your fathers,—
For which God hath sent you
No authority: the Command
Is for none but God: He

تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُمْ
بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ○

۳۸- وَالَّتِ بَعَثْتُ مِلَّةَ آبَائِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ
وَيَعْقُوبَ مَا كَانَ لَنَا أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ ذَلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَ
عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ

۳۹- يَا صَاحِبِي السِّجْنِ
أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ بَابٌ مُتَّفَقٌ فَوْقَ خَيْدٍ
أَوِ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ○

۴۰- مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءُ
سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا
أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ
سُلْطَانٍ رَبِّ الْخُلُقِ الْإِلَهِي

1690. These men were Egyptians, perhaps steeped in materialism, idolatry, and polytheism. He must teach them the Gospel of Unity. And he does it simply, by appealing to his own experience. 'I have found the Lord good: in prosperity and adversity I have been supported by Faith: in life no man can live by error or evil: perhaps one of you has done some wrong for which you find yourself here: perhaps one of you is innocent: in either case, will you not accept Faith and live for ever?'

1691. Again the same note of personal modesty. 'You may think I am as young as you, or younger. Yes, but I have the heritage of great men renowned for wisdom and truth, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Surely what they knew is worthy of respect. Never did they swerve a hair's breadth from the Gospel of Unity. It is not that we boast. It was God's grace that taught us and God's grace is teaching all mankind. But men show their ingratitude by inventing other so-called gods.'

1692. Note the personal touch again. 'Are we not also companions in misfortune? And may I not speak to you on terms of perfect equality,—as one prisoner to another? Well then, do you really think a conflict of heterogeneous gods is better than the One True God, Whose power is supreme and irresistible?'

1693. 'If you name other gods, they are nothing but your inventions,—names which you and your fathers put forward without any reality behind them. Who gave you authority to do any such thing? The only reality is God. Authority can come from Him alone. It is only for Him to command. And He has distinctly commanded you to worship none other than Him. That is the only religion that is right,—that has stood and will stand and endure for ever. He has revealed it at all times by His Messengers and by His Signs. If men fail to understand, it is their own fault.'

Hath commanded that ye worship
None but Him: that is
The right religion, but
Most men understand not...

أَمَرَ أَنْ تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ
الْقَيُّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ○

41. "Oh my two companions¹⁶⁹⁴
Of the prison! As to one
Of you, he will pour out
The wine for his lord to drink:¹⁶⁹⁵
As for the other, he will
Hang from the cross, and the birds
Will eat from off his head.¹⁶⁹⁶
(So) hath been decreed
That matter whereof
Ye twain do enquire...

٣١-يُصَاحِبِي السِّجْنِ
أَمَّا أَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِي رَبَّهُ خَمْرًا
وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَيُصَلَّبُ فَتَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْ
رَأْسِهِ
قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ الَّذِي
فِيهِ تَسْتَفْتِينَ ○

42. And of the two,
To that one whom he considered
About to be saved, he said:
"Mention me to thy lord."¹⁶⁹⁷

٣٢-وَقَالَ لِلَّذِي ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ
نَاجٍ مِنْهُمَا اذْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ

1694. Having fulfilled his great duty, that touching the things of the spirit, Joseph now passes on, and comes to the things in which they were immediately interested,—the questions which they had asked him about their dreams and what they prognosticated of their immediate future. Notice how Joseph again puts himself into sympathy with them by repeating the phrase of *camaraderie*, "my two companions of the prison!" For one he has good news, and for the other, bad news. He does not mince matters or waste words. He just barely tells the truth, hoping that the higher spiritual truths of which he has spoken will appear in their eyes, too, as of more importance than mere earthly triumphs or disasters,—(in Kipling's words) "both impostors all the same."

1695. The cup-bearer had perhaps been proved innocent of the crime which had been charged against him, and was to be restored to the favour of the Pharaoh. He was to carry the cup and be the king's confidante again. How much more good he could do now, after the spiritual influence he had imbibed from Joseph the man of God! He was more fortunate in having had Joseph's company than in being restored to his intimate position with the king! Yet he was not a perfect man, as we shall see presently.

1696. For the baker, alas! he had bad news, and he tells it directly without tantalising him. Perhaps he had been found guilty—perhaps he had been really guilty—of some act of embezzlement or of joining in some palace intrigue, and he was to die a malefactor's death on the cross, followed by exposure to birds of the air—vultures pecking away at his eyes and cheeks, and all that had been his face and head! Poor man! If he was guilty, Joseph had taught him repentance, and we should like to think that he lost in this life but gained in the next. If he was innocent, the cruel death did not affect him. Joseph had shown him a higher and more lasting hope in the Hereafter.

1697. Joseph never mentioned himself in interpreting the dream, nor ever thought of himself in his kindness to his fellow-sufferers in prison. It was afterwards, when the cup-bearer's dream came true, and he was being released on being restored to favour, that we can imagine him taking an affectionate leave of Joseph, and even asking him in his elation if he could do anything for Joseph. Joseph had no need of earthly favours,—least of all, from kings or their favourites. The divine grace was enough for him. But he had great work to do, which he could not do in prison—work for Egypt and her king, and the world at large. If the cup-bearer could mention him to the king, not by way of recommendation (*sifarish*), but because the king's own justice was being violated; in keeping an innocent man in prison, perhaps that might help to advance the cause of the king and of Egypt. And so he said, "Mention me to Pharaoh."

But Satan made him forget ¹⁶⁹⁸
To mention him to his lord:
And (Joseph) lingered in prison
A few (more) years. ¹⁶⁹⁹

فَأَنسَاهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ
فَلَيْكَ فِي السِّجْنِ بَضْعَةُ سِنِينَ ٥

C. 111.—The king of Egypt saw a vision
(xii. 43-68.) Which none of his grantees could explain.
The cup-bearer referred to Joseph,
Who was sent for by the king. But Joseph
Insisted that the voice of scandal,
Which had pointed to him, should be declared
In public to be false. After Zulaikhā
Had paid a splendid ungrudging tribute
To his truth and righteousness, he came,
And was invested with supreme power
By the king. In times of plenty he organised
Great reserves to meet the needs
Of famine. When wide-spread famine at last
Prevailed, his brothers came from Canaan
In search of corn. He treated them kindly
And got them to bring his youngest brother
Benjamin: but they knew not he was Joseph.

SECTION 6.

43. The king (of Egypt) said: ¹⁷⁰⁰

"I do see (in a vision)
Seven fat kine, whom seven
Lean ones devour,—and seven
Green ears of corn, and seven
(others)

Withered. Oh ye chiefs!
Expound to me my vision
If it be that ye can
Interpret visions."

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ
سَيَمَانُ يَأْكُلْنَ سَبْعَ رَجَافٍ
وَسَبْعَ سُنبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَةٍ
يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي رَأْيِي
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّءْيَى تَعْبُرُونَ ٥

1698. The eternal Plan does not put God's men under obligations to men commanding mere worldly favour or earthly power. If they are given a chance, the obligation is on the worldly men, however highly placed...In this case, the poor cup-bearer was but human. When he was in the midst of the Court, he forgot the poor fellow-prisoner languishing in prison. In this he yielded to the lower part of his nature, which is guided by Satan, the personification of evil,—a real force in our lives if we but knew it.

1699. A few (more) years: *biḥ* in Arabic signifies a small indefinite number, say up to 3, 5, 7, or 9 years.

1700. The Pharaoh is holding a Council. His confidential adviser the cup-bearer is present. The Pharaoh relates his double dream,—of seven fat kine being devoured by seven lean ones, and of seven fine full green ears of corn (presumably being devoured) by seven dry withered ears.

44. They said: "A confused medley
Of dreams: and we are not
Skilled in the interpretation
Of dreams." 1701

٢٣- قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ أَحْلَامٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِمُتَأْوِيلِ الْأَحْلَامِ بِعِلْمَيْنِ ○

45. But the man who had been
Released, one of the two
(Who had been in prison)
And who now bethought him
After (so long) a space of time,
Said: "I will tell you
The truth of its interpretation:
Send ye me (therefor)." 1702

٢٤- وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَّاهُمَا
وَإِذْ كَرِهَ الْأَمَّةُ
أَنَا أَنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ
بِمُتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ ○

46. "Oh Joseph!" (he said),
"Oh man of truth! Expound
To us (the dream)
Of seven fat kine
Whom seven lean ones
Devour, and of seven
Green ears of corn
And (seven) others withered:
That I may return
To the people, and that
They may understand." 1703

٢٥- يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ
أَقْبِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ
يَأْكُلُنَّ سَبْعَ عَجَائٍ
وَسَبْعِ سُتْبَلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَبْسُتٍ
لَعَلِّي أَرْجِعُ إِلَى النَّاسِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ○

47. (Joseph) said: "For seven years
Shall ye diligently sow

٢٦- قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ

1701. No one in the Council apparently wanted to take the responsibility either of interpreting the dream, or of carrying out any measures consequent on the interpretation.

1702. At length the cup-bearer's conscience was awakened. He thought of Joseph. He (Joseph) was a truthful man, and the cup-bearer knew by personal experience how skilful he was in the interpretation of dreams. Perhaps he could get him released at this juncture by getting him to interpret the Pharaoh's dream. If he had been frank, straight, and direct, he would have mentioned Joseph at once, and presented him to Pharaoh. But he had worldly subtlety. He wanted some credit for himself, at the same time that he fulfilled an old obligation. His petty conscience would be satisfied if he got Joseph's release, but meanwhile he wanted to see how much attention he could draw to himself in the court. So he just asked permission to withdraw in order to find the interpretation. He went straight to the prison, and addressed himself to Joseph, as in the following verse.

1703. The speech must have been longer, to explain the circumstances. We are just given the points. From Joseph he conceals nothing. He knows that Joseph knows more than himself. He tells Joseph that if he got the meaning, he would go and tell the Council. It would be impertinent for the cup-bearer to hold out to Joseph, the man of God, the bribe of the hope of his release. Notice how blandly he avoids referring to his own lapse in having forgotten Joseph so long, and how the magnanimous Joseph has not a word of reproach, but gets straight on with the interpretation.

As is your wont:
And the harvests that ye reap,
Ye shall leave them in the ear,—¹⁷⁰⁴
Except a little, of which
Ye shall eat.

دَانَا
فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ تَذَرُوهُ فِي سُلَيْلِهِ
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ ○

48. "Then will come
After that (period)
Seven dreadful (years),
Which will devour
What ye shall have laid by
In advance for them,—
(All) except a little ¹⁷⁰⁵
Which ye shall have
(Specially) guarded.

٣٨ ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ
يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
مِمَّا تَحْصِنُونَ ○

49. "Then will come
After that (period) a year
In which the people will have
Abundant water, and in which
They will press (wine and oil)." ¹⁷⁰⁶

٣٩ ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ
فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ
وَفِيهِ يُعْصَرُونَ ○

1704. Joseph not only shows what will happen, but, unasked, suggests the measures to be taken for dealing with the calamity when it comes. There will be seven years of abundant harvest. With diligent cultivation they should get bumper crops. Of them they should take a little for their sustenance and store the rest in the ear, the better to preserve it from the pests that attack corn-heaps when they have passed through the threshing floor.

1705. There will follow seven years of dreadful famine, which will devour all the stores which they will have laid by in the good years. They must be careful, even during the famine, not to consume all the grain; they must by special arrangement save a little for seed, lest they should be helpless even when the Nile brought down abundant waters from the rains at its sources.

1706. This is a symbol of a very abundant year, following the seven years of drought. The Nile must have brought abundant fertilising waters and silt from its upper reaches, and there was probably some rain also in Lower Egypt. The vine and the olive trees, which must have suffered in the drought, now revived, and yielded their juice and their oil; among the annuals, also, the oil seeds, such as linseed, sesamum, and the castor oil plant, must have been grown, as there was irrigated land and to spare from the abundant grain crops. And the people's spirits revived, to enjoy the finer products of the earth, when their absolute necessities had been more than met in their grain-crops.

SECTION 7.

50. So the king said:

"Bring ye him unto me."¹⁷⁰⁷

But when the messenger
Came to him, (Joseph) said:

"Go thou back to thy lord,

And ask him, 'What is

The state of mind

Of the ladies

Who cut their hands' ?"¹⁷⁰⁸

For my Lord is

Certainly well aware

Of their snare."¹⁷⁰⁹

هـ- وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ اسْتَنْوِي بِهِ

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ الرَّسُولُ قَالَ

انْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ

فَسَأَلَهُ مَا بَالُ النِّسْوَةِ الَّتِي

قَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ

إِنَّ رَبِّي بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيمٌ ٥

51. (The king) said (to the ladies):

"What was your affair

When ye did seek to seduce

Joseph from his (true) self ?"¹⁷¹⁰

The ladies said: "God

Preserve us! no evil

هـ- قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ

إِذْ رَاوَدْتُنَّ يُوسُفَ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ

قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سُوءٍ

1707. The cup-bearer must have reported Joseph's interpretation to the king, and the king naturally wanted to see Joseph himself. He sent a messenger to fetch him.

1708. The king's messenger must have expected that a prisoner would be only too overjoyed at the summons of the king. But Joseph, sure of himself, wanted some assurance that he would be safe from the sort of nagging and persecution to which he had been subjected by the ladies. We saw in verse 33 above that he preferred prison to their solicitations. He must therefore know what was in the mind of the women now. Note how discreetly he omits any particular mention of Zulaikha, who after all had been kind to him, and whose unschooled love had been tested all these years and been nearly purified of its grosser elements by now. But Mrs. Grundy, who understood (and perhaps practised for herself) only the grosser side of her passion, must be put in her place, if Joseph was to have a chance of doing the great work for which he was marked out.

1709. If the king ("thy lord") did not know of all the snares which had been laid for Joseph by the ladies, God ("my Lord") knew all their secret motives and plots.

1710. Joseph's message was conveyed by the messenger to the king, who sent for the ladies concerned. Among them came Zulaikha. "What was this affair?" said the king: "tell me the whole truth."

Know we against him!"
 Said the 'Aziz's wife:
 "Now is the truth manifest
 (To all): it was I
 Who sought to seduce him
 From his (true) self:
 He is indeed of those
 Who are (ever) true (and
 virtuous).¹⁷¹¹

قَالَتْ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ
 اِنَّ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقِّ
 اَنَا رَاوَدْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ
 وَرَأَيْتُهُ لِمَنِ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ۝

52. "This (say I), in order that
 He may know that I
 Have never been false
 To him in his absence,
 And that God will never
 12 Guide the snare of the false
 30 ones.¹⁷¹²

۵۲- ذَلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ اِنِّي
 لَمْ اُخْذْهُ بِالْغَيْبِ
 وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِي كَيْدَ الْخٰٓائِبِيْنَ ۝

1711. Zulaikha stood by, while the other ladies answered. Their answer was the answer of Mrs. Grundy, grudgingly acknowledging the truth of Joseph's innocence and high principles, but holding a discreet silence about Mrs. Grundy's own part in egging on poor Zulaikha to sin, wrong-doing, and revenge. When they had done, she began. She did not mince matters. She acknowledged her own guilt, freely and frankly. This was no time for her even to refer to other ladies,—their jealousy, their gross-mindedness, their encouragement of all that was frail or evil in herself. These things she ignored. But to her awakened spiritual consciousness it was a triumph that Joseph, whom she adored, was true in every sense, in word and deed, and that that truth should be proclaimed in open Court before all, as was indeed already known to all concerned when she had taken the blame on herself before the assembly of ladies, and her own spirit had not yet been emancipated. What had happened to her since? She had learnt much in sorrow, pain, and humiliation. She had learnt the vanity of carnal love. But Joseph, true of heart, calm in every turn of fortune, had taught her to question herself whether, in spite of all her sin, she could not yet be worthy of him. Perhaps her husband was dead, and she a widow. But she must see whether she could understand love in the sense in which Joseph would have her understand it—that pure surrender of self, which has no earthy stain to it!

1712. I construe verses 52 and 53 to be a continuation of Zulaikha's speech and have translated accordingly. There is both good reason and authority (e.g. Ibn Kathir) for this. But the majority of Commentators construe verses 52-53 to be spoken by Joseph, in which case they would mean that Joseph was referring to his fidelity to the 'Aziz, that he had never taken advantage of his absence to play false with his wife, although he (Joseph) was human and liable to err. In my view Zulaikha, while fully reprobating her own guilty conduct, claims that she has at least been constant, and that she hopes for mercy, forgiveness, and the capacity to understand at last what true love is. Whatever false charge she made, she made it in a moment of passion and to his face, never in cold blood, or behind his back.

Guide the snare of the false ones, i.e., allow such snare to attain its goal.

53. "Nor do I absolve my own self
(Of guilt): the (human) soul
Is certainly prone to evil,
Unless my Lord do bestow
His Mercy: but surely
My Lord is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful." 1713

هـ- وَمَا أَبْرِئُ نَفْسِي
إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالشُّوْءِ
لَا مَا رَجِمَ رَبِّي
إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

54. So the king said:
"Bring him unto me; 1714
I will take him specially
To serve about my own person."
Therefore when he had spoken
To him, he said:
"Be assured this day,
Thou art, before our own Presence,
With rank firmly established,
And fidelity fully proved!" 1715

هـ- وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ انْتُونِي بِهٖ
اَنْتَخِيْضَةً لِّنَفْسِيْ
فَلَمَّا كَلِمَةً قَالَ
اِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا
مَكِينٌ اَمِيْنٌ

55. (Joseph) said: "Set me
Over the store-houses 1716
Of the land: I will
Indeed guard them,

هـ- قَالَ اجْعَلْنِيْ عَلَى خَزَائِنِ الْاَرْضِ
لِيْ حَافِظٌ

1713. See last note. I construe this verse to be a continuation of Zulaikha's speech. It is more appropriate to her than to Joseph. As I understand it, Zulaikha has at last come to have a realisation of all that had been wrong in her conduct and a glimmering of the true meaning of spiritual love, which has something divine in it, and which cannot be attained except by the outpouring of all our soul to God.

1714. Joseph had not yet appeared before the king. The king's order in the same terms in verse 59 above had led to a message from Joseph and the subsequent public proceedings with the ladies. Now that Joseph's innocence, wisdom, truth, and trustworthiness had been proved, and confirmed by Zulaikha's splendid tribute, and Joseph's own manly bearing before the king, the king was much impressed, and took him specially to serve about his own person as his trusty and confidential Wazir. If, as is probable, the 'Aziz had by this time died (for he is never mentioned again) Joseph succeeded to his office, and he is addressed as 'Aziz in verse 78 below. But Joseph got more than his rank and powers, as specially selected to carry out a great emergency policy to meet the very difficult times of depression that were foretold. He was given plenary powers and the fullest confidence that a king could give to his most trusted and best-proved Wazir or Prime Minister, with special access to his Person, like a Grand Chamberlain.

1715. Who was this Pharaoh, and what approximate date could we assign to him? He was probably a king of the Hyksos Dynasty, somewhere between the 19th and the 17th century B.C. See Appendix IV, on Egyptian Chronology and Israel (printed after, S. vii).

1716. Joseph had been given plenary authority by the king. He could have enjoyed his dignity, drawn his emoluments, put the hard and perhaps unpopular work on the shoulders of others, and kept to himself the glitter and the kudos. But that was not his way, nor can it indeed be the way of any one who wants to do real service. He undertook the hardest and most unpopular task himself. Such a task was that of organising reserves in times of plenty, against the lean years to come. He deliberately asked to be put in charge of the granaries and store-houses, and the drudgery of establishing them and guarding them, for the simple reason that he understood that need better than anyone else, and was prepared to take upon himself rather than throw on to another the obloquy of restricting supplies in times of plenty.

As one that knows
(Their importance)."

56. Thus did we give
Established power to Joseph
In the land, to take possession¹⁷¹⁷
Therein as, when, or where
He pleased. We bestow
Of Our mercy on whom
We please, and We suffer not,
To be lost, the reward
Of those who do good.

57. But verily the reward
Of the Hereafter
Is the best, for those
Who believe, and are constant
In righteousness.¹⁷¹⁸

SECTION 8.

58. When came Joseph's
brethren:¹⁷¹⁹
They entered his presence,
And he knew them,
But they knew him not.

عليه

٥٦- وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ
فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ
نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ
وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

٥٧- وَلَا أَجْرُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

٥٨- وَجَاءَ إِخْوَةُ يُوسُفَ فَدَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ
فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُكْرَرُونَ

1717. What a wonderful example of the working of divine Providence! The boy whom his jealous brothers got rid of by selling him into slavery for a miserable price becomes the most trusted dignitary in a foreign land, chief minister in one of the greatest empires of the world of that day. And this not for himself only, but for his family, for the world at large, and for that noble example of righteousness and strenuous service, which he was to set for all time. According to tradition, Joseph's age was barely 30 at that time!

As, when, or where he pleased: *haliku* refers to manner, time, or place. He had a Dictator's powers, but as his fidelity was fully proved (xii. 53) these powers were for service rather than for self.

1718. To the righteous, whatever rewards (if any) that come in this world are welcome for the opportunities of service which they open out. But the true and best reward is in the Hereafter.

1719. Years pass; the times of prosperity go by; famine holds the land in its grip; and it extends to neighbouring countries. Joseph's preparations are complete. His reserves are ample to meet the calamity. Not only does Egypt bless him, but neighbouring countries sent to Egypt to purchase corn. All are received with hospitality, and corn is sold to them according to judicious measure.

Now there has been one sorrow gnawing at Joseph's heart. His poor father Jacob! How he must have wept, as indeed he did, at the loss of his beloved Joseph! And Joseph's little brother Benjamin, born of the same mother as himself; would the other ten brothers, not by the same mother, have any affection for him, or would they treat him, as they treated Joseph? How would the whole family be in these hard times? A sort of answer came when the ten selfish brothers, driven by famine, came from Canaan to buy corn. Joseph, though so great a man, kept the details of the famine department in his own hands: otherwise there might have been waste. But to the public he was a mighty Egyptian administrator, probably in Egyptian dress, and with all the paraphernalia of his rank about him. When his brothers came, he knew them, but they did not know he was Joseph. In their thoughts Joseph was probably some menial slave in a remote household, perhaps already starved to death in these hard times!

59. And when he had furnished
Them forth with provisions
(Suitable) for them, he said:
"Bring unto me a brother
Ye have, of the same father
As yourselves, (but a different
mother):
See ye not that I pay out
Full measure, and that I
Do provide the best hospitality? ¹⁷²⁰

٥٩- وَلَمَّا جَهَّزْتُم بِمَهَازِمِهِمْ
قَالَ اسْتَوْفِي بِيَاخِي
لَكُمْ مِنْ لَيْسَتِكُمْ
أَلَا تَرَوْنَ أَنِّي أَوْفِي الْكَيْلِ
وَأَنَا خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ ○

60. "Now if ye bring him not
To me, ye shall have
No measure (of corn) from me,
Nor shall ye (even) come
Near me."

٦٠- فَإِنْ لَمْ تَأْتُونِي بِهِ
فَلَا كَيْلَ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي
وَلَا تَقْرُبُونِ ○

61. They said: "We shall
Certainly seek to get
Our wish about him
From his father: ¹⁷²¹
Indeed we shall do it."

٦١- قَالُوا سَأَلْزُودُ عَنْهُ أَبَاهُ
وَرَأَى لَفْعَلُونِ ○

62. And (Joseph) told his servants
To put their stock-in-trade ¹⁷²²
(With which they had bartered)
Into their saddle-bags,
So they should know it
When they returned to their
people,

٦٢- وَقَالَ لِفَتِيئِهِ اجْعَلُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ فِي
بِحَالِهِمْ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُونَهَا
إِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَى أَهْلِهِمْ

1720. Joseph treated his brothers liberally. Perhaps he condescended to enter into conversation with these strangers, and enquired about their family. The ten brothers had come. Had they left a father behind them? What sort of a person was he? Very aged? Well, of course he could not come. Had they any other brothers? Doubtless the ten brothers said nothing about their lost Joseph, or told some lie about him. But perhaps their host's kindly insistence brought Benjamin into the conversation. How old was he? Why had they not brought him? Would they bring him next time? Indeed they must, or they would get no more corn, and he—the great Egyptian Wazir—would not even see them.

1721. The brothers said: "Certainly, we shall try to beg him of our father, and bring him away with us: we shall certainly comply with your desire." In reality they probably loved Benjamin no more than they loved Joseph. But they must get food when the present supply was exhausted, and they must humour the great Egyptian Wazir. Note that they do not call Jacob "our father" but "his father": how little they loved their aged father, whom they identified with Joseph and Benjamin! Their trial and their instruction in their duties is now being undertaken by Joseph.

1722. *Bigħal*: stock-in-trade; capital with which business is carried on; money when it is used as capital for trade. It is better here to suppose that they were bartering goods for grain. Cf. xii, 19.

In order that they
Might come back.¹⁷²³

63. Now when they returned
To their father, they said:
"Oh our father! No more
Measure of grain shall we get
(Unless we take our brother):
So send our brother with us,
That we may get our measure;
And we will indeed
Take great care of him."¹⁷²⁴

64. He said: "Shall I trust you
With him with any result
Other than when I trusted you
With his brother aforetime?
But God is the best
To take care (of him),
And He is the Most Merciful
Of those who show mercy!"¹⁷²⁵

65. Then when they opened
Their baggage, they found
Their stock-in-trade had been
Returned to them. They said:
"Oh our father! What (more)
Can we desire? This our
Stock-in-trade has been
returned¹⁷²⁶
To us: so we shall get

لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ○

١٣- فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا إِلَى أَبِيهِمْ قَالُوا
يَا أَبَانَا مُنْجِئْنَا مِنَ الْكَيْلِ
فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا أَخَانَا نَكْتَلْ
وَرَأَيْنَا لَهُ لِحْظُونَ ○

١٤- قَالَ هَلْ أَمْنَكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا
كَمَا أَمَنْتُمْ عَلَى أَخِيهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ
قَالَ اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ حِفْظًا
وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ○

١٥- وَلَمَّا فَكَّحُوا مَتَاعَهُمْ وَجَدُوا
بِضَاعَتَهُمْ رُدَّتْ إِلَيْهِمْ
قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا نَبْغِي
هَذِهِ بِضَاعَتُنَا رُدَّتْ إِلَيْنَا

1723. It was most important for Joseph's plan that they should come back. If they came back at all, they could not come without Benjamin after what he had told them. As an additional incentive to their coming back, he returns the price of the grain in such a way that they should find it in their saddle-bags when they reach home.

1724. On their return they no doubt told Jacob all that had transpired. But to beg Benjamin of him was no easy matter, as Jacob did not trust them and had no cause to trust them after their treatment of Joseph. So they use the argument of urgent necessity for all it is worth.

1725. I construe Jacob's answer to be a flat refusal to let Benjamin go with them. It would be like the former occasion when he trusted Joseph with them and they lost him. Did they talk of taking care of him? The only protection that he trusted was that of God. He at least showed mercy to old and young alike. Did man show such mercy? Witness his sad old age and his lost little Joseph! Would they bring down "his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave"?

1726. The ten brothers did not take their father's refusal as final. They opened their saddle-bags, and found that the price they had paid for their provisions had been returned to them. They had got the grain free! What more could they desire? The spell which Joseph had woven now worked. If they only went back, this kind Wazir would give more grain if they pleased him. And the only way to please him was to take back their younger brother with them. It would cost them nothing. Judging by past experience they would get a whole camel's load of grain n.w. And so they stated their case to the aged father.

(More) food for our family;
We shall take care of our brother;
And add (at the same time)
A full camel's load (of grain
To our provisions).
This is but a small quantity.¹⁷²⁷

وَنُؤَيِّرُ أَهْلَنَا وَنَحْفَظُ أَخَانَا
وَنَزِدُّكَ كَيْلَ بَعِيرٍ
ذَلِكَ كَيْلٌ يَسِيرٌ ○

66. (Jacob) said: "Never will I
Send him with you until
Ye swear a solemn oath,
In God's name, that ye
Will be sure to bring him back
To me unless ye are yourselves
Hemmed in (and made
powerless).¹⁷²⁸

And when they had sworn
Their solemn oath,
He said: "Over all
That we say, be God
The Witness and Guardian!"¹⁷²⁹

٦٦- قَالَ لَنْ أَرْسِلَهُ مَعَكُمْ حَتَّى
تُؤْتُوا بِي مَوْثِقًا مِنْ اللَّهِ
لَنَأْتِيَنَّ بِهِ
إِلَّا أَنْ يُمْسِكَ بِكُمْ
فَلَمَّا آتَوْهُ مَوْثِقَهُمْ
قَالَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَا تَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ ○

67. Further he said:
"Oh my sons! enter not¹⁷³⁰
All by one gate: enter ye
By different gates. Not that

٦٧- وَقَالَ لِبَنِيّ لَا تَدْخُلُوا
مِنْ بَابٍ وَاحِدٍ وَادْخُلُوا مِنْ أَبْوَابٍ مُتَفَرِّقَةٍ

1727. Two meanings are possible,—either or perhaps both. 'What we have brought now is nothing compared to what we shall get if we humour the whim of the Egyptian Wazir. And, moreover, Egypt seems to have plenty of grain stored up. What is a camel-load to her Wazir to give away?'

1728. The appeal to the family's needs in the time of famine at length made Jacob relent, but he exacted a solemn promise from the brothers, under the most religious sanctions, that they would bring Benjamin back to him, unless they were themselves prevented, as the Insurance Policies say, "by an act of God," so that they became really powerless. To that promise Jacob called God to witness.

1729. This is more than a formula. God is invoked as present and witnessing the bargain, and to Him both parties make over the affair to arrange and fulfil.

1730. The Commentators refer to a Jewish or Eastern custom or superstition which forbade members of a numerous family to go together in a mass for fear of "the evil eye". But apart from East or West, or custom or superstition, it would be ridiculous for any large family of ten or eleven to parade together in a procession among strangers. But there was even a better reason in this particular case, which made Jacob's advice sound, and Jacob was, as stated in the next verse, a man of knowledge and experience. Here were eleven strangers dressed alike, in a dress not of the country, talking a strange language, coming in a time of stress, on an errand for which they had no credentials. Would they not attract undue attention and suspicion if they went together? Would they not be taken for spies?—or for men bent on some mischief, theft or organised crime? Such a suspicion is referred to in verse 73 below. By entering separately they would attract little attention. Jacob very wisely tells them to take all human precautions. But like a man of God he warns them that human precautions would be no good if they neglect or run counter to far weightier matters—God's Will and Law. Above all, they must try to understand and obey this, and their trust should be on God rather than on human usages, institutions, or precautions, however good and reasonable these might be.

I can profit you aught
Against God (with my advice):
None can command except God:
On Him do I put my trust:
And let all that trust
Put their trust on Him."

وَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
إِنَّ الْحَكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلَيْهِ
فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ ٥

68. And when they entered
In the manner their father
Had enjoined, it did not
Profit them in the least
Against (the Plan of) God:¹⁷³¹
It was but a necessity
Of Jacob's soul, which he¹⁷³²
Discharged. For he was,
By Our instruction, full
Of knowledge (and experience):
But most men know not.¹⁷³³

٦٨- وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُمْ أَبُوهُمْ
مَا كَانَ يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
إِلَّا حَاجَةً فِي نَفْسِ يَعْقُوبَ قَضَاهَا
وَرَأَاهُ لِلزُّلُمِ لِمَا عَمِلْنَاهُ
وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ٥

C. 112.—When the brothers went back without Benjamin,
(xii. 69-93.) Jacob was overwhelmed with grief, but he bore
His affliction with patience and faith in God.
He refused to be comforted and sent his sons back,
To Egypt. At last Joseph revealed himself,
Forgave them, and sent his shirt by them
To Jacob, to tell him the good news
That Joseph lived and did great work
In Egypt, and had sent for his whole family
To come and rejoice and live in the land
Of Egypt, and be a blessing to all.

1731. See the last verse and n. 1730. Though they scrupulously observed their father's injunctions to the letter, their hearts were not yet pure, and they got into trouble, as the later story will show. They had the hardihood to cast aspersions on Joseph, not knowing that they were in Joseph's power. And Joseph took a noble revenge by planning a reunion of the whole family and shaming the ten brothers into repentance. He was the instrument for the fulfilment of God's Plan.

1732. It is a necessity of a Prophet's soul that he should speak out and teach all that he knows, to the worthy and unworthy alike. This Jacob did to his unworthy sons, as well as to his worthy sons whom he loved best. It was not for him as a Prophet to guarantee any results. In this case he could not save his sons from getting into trouble merely because they followed the letter of his advice in a small matter. Apply this to the teaching of a greater than Jacob. Men who literally observe some small injunctions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and neglect the greater principles which he taught cannot blame him for their troubles and difficulties. If they examined the matter, they would find that they brought the troubles on themselves.

1733. The men of God are full of knowledge,—not as men, but as taught by the grace of God. For men, as such, are (as Carlyle said) mostly fools,—devoid of knowledge and understanding.

SECTION 9.

69. Now when they came
 Into Joseph's presence,¹⁷⁸⁴
 He received his (full) brother¹⁷⁸⁵
 To stay with him. He said
 (To him): "Behold! I am thy (own)
 Brother; so grieve not
 At aught of their doings."¹⁷⁸⁶
70. At length when he had furnished
 Them forth with provisions
 (Suitable) for them, he put
 The drinking cup into
 His brother's saddle-bag.
 Then shouted out a Crier:
 "Oh ye (in) the Caravan!
 Behold! ye are thieves,
 Without doubt!"¹⁷⁸⁷
71. They said, turning towards them:
 "What is it that ye miss?"
72. They said: "We miss
 The great beaker of the king;

٦٩- وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ
 أَدَّى إِلَيْهِ أَخَاهُ
 قَالَ إِنِّي أَنَا أَخُوكَ
 فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ○

٧٠- فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَّازِهِمْ
 جَعَلَ الْبَيْقَايَةَ فِي رَحْلِ أَخِيهِ
 ثُمَّ أَذَّن مُوْذِنٌ
 أَيْتَهَا الْعَرَابُ انْظُرُوا لَسِرْقُونِ ○

٧١- قَالُوا وَاقْبَلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ مَاذَا تَفْقَدُونَ ○

٧٢- قَالُوا تَفْقَدُ صُوعًا مَلِكًا

1784. The ten brothers, with Benjamin, arrived in Egypt, and waited on the great Wazir. Joseph again received them hospitably, even more so than before, as they had complied with his request to bring Benjamin. No doubt many shrewd and probing questions were asked by Joseph, and no doubt it was clear that Benjamin was one apart from the other ten. Baïghāwī fills up the picture of the great feast for us. The guests were seated two by two. Benjamin was the odd one, and Joseph courteously took him to his own table.

1785. After the feast the question of lodgings arose. They were to be accommodated two by two. Again Benjamin was the odd one. What more natural than that the Wazir should take him to himself? He thus got a chance of privacy with him. He disclosed his identity to him, charging him to keep it a secret, and to take no notice of any strange doings that might occur. He must have learnt from Benjamin about his father and about the inner doings of the family. He must get them all together into Egypt under his own eye. He had a plan, and he proceeded to put it into execution.

1786. The past tense of *Kāna*, combined with the aorist of *Y'a'mālan*, signifies that the reference is to their brother's doings, past, present, and future. Benjamin was not to mind what wrongs they had done in the past, or how they behaved in the present or the immediate future. Joseph had a plan that required Benjamin's silence in strange circumstances.

1787. Joseph's plan was to play a practical joke on them, which would achieve two objects. Immediately it would put them into some consternation, but nothing comparable to what he had suffered at their hands. When the plan was unravelled, it would make them thoroughly ashamed of themselves, and dramatically bring home their guilt to them. Secondly, it would give him an excuse to detain Benjamin and bring their aged father into Egypt. He contrived that a valuable drinking cup should be concealed in Benjamin's saddle-bag. When it was found after an ostentatious search, he would detain the supposed culprit, and attain his object, as the story relates further on.

For him who produces it,
Is (the reward of)
A camel load; I
Will be bound by it."

73. (The brothers) said: "By God!
Well ye know that we
Came not to make mischief
In the land, and we are
No thieves!" 1738

74. (The Egyptians) said: "What then
Shall be the penalty of this,
If ye are (proved) to have
lied?" 1739

75. They said: "The penalty
Should be that he
In whose saddle-bag
It is found, should be held
(As bondman) to atone 1740
For the (crime). Thus it is
We punish the wrong-doers!" 1741

76. So he 1743 began (the search)
With their baggage,

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ حَبْلُ بَعِيرٍ
وَإِنَّا لَهُمْ رُغِيمٌ ٥٣

٥٣- قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا جِئْتَنَا
لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَمَا كُنَّا سَارِقِينَ ٥

٥٤- قَالُوا فَمَا جَزَاؤُهُ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَاذِبِينَ ٥

٥٥- قَالُوا جَزَاؤُهُ مَنْ وَجَدَ فِي سَكِّهِ
فَهُوَ جَزَاؤُهُ
كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ٥

٥٦- فَبَدَأَ بِأَوْعِيَتِهِمْ

1738. As strangers in a strange land, they were liable to be suspected as spies or men who meditated some unlawful design, or some crime, such as theft, which would be common in a season of scarcity. The brothers protested against the absurdity of such a suspicion after they had been entertained so royally by the Wazir.

1739. "That might be all very well," said the Egyptians, "but what if it is found by a search that you have in fact abused the Wazir's hospitality by stealing a valuable cup?"

1740. We must try to picture to ourselves the mentality of the ten. They understood each other perfectly, in their sins as well as in other things. For themselves, the search held out no fears. Besides they had had no opportunity of stealing. But what of that young fellow Benjamin? They were ready to believe anything against him, the more so as the Wazir's partiality for him had lent a keen edge to their jealousy. Judging by their own standards, they would not be surprised if he had stolen, seeing that he had had such opportunities—sitting at the High Table and staying with the Wazir. They felt very self-righteous, at the same time that they indulged in the luxury of accusing in their thoughts the most innocent of men! Supposing he had stolen, here would be a fine opportunity of getting rid of him. What about their solemn oath to their father? Oh! that was covered by the exception. He had done for himself. They had done all they could to protect him, but they were powerless. The old man could come and see for himself.

1741. This was their family custom. It was of course long anterior to the Mosaic Law, which laid down full restitution for theft, and if the culprit had nothing, he was to be sold for his theft (Exod. xxii. 3). But here the crime was more than theft. It was theft, lying, and the grossest abuse of confidence and hospitality. While the ten felt a secret satisfaction in suggesting the penalty, they were unconsciously carrying out Joseph's plan. Thus the vilest motives often help in carrying out the most beneficent plans.

1742. The pronoun "he" can only refer to Joseph. He may have been present all the time, or he may just have come up, as the supposed theft of the king's own cup (xii. 72 above) was a very serious and important affair, and the investigation required his personal supervision. All that his officers did by his orders was his own act. As the lawyers say: *Qui facit per alium, facit per se* (whoever does anything through another, does it himself).

Before (he came to) the
baggage ¹⁷⁴³
Of his brother: at length
He brought it ¹⁷⁴⁴ out of his
Brother's baggage. Thus did We
Plan for Joseph. He could not
Take his brother by the law
Of the king except that God ¹⁷¹⁵
Willed it (so). We raise
To degrees (of wisdom) whom ¹⁷⁴⁵
We please: but over all
Endued with knowledge is One,
The All-Knowing.

77. They said: "If he steals,
There was a brother of his
Who did steal before (him)." ¹⁷⁴⁷
But these things did Joseph
Keep locked in his heart,
Revealing not the secrets to
them. ¹⁷⁴⁸

قَبْلَ دَعَاؤِ أَخِيهِ
ثُمَّ اسْتَفْرَجَهَا مِنْ دَعَاؤِ أَخِيهِ
كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الْيُوسُفُ
مَا كَانَ لِيَأْخُذَ أَخَاهُ فِي دِينِ الْمَلِكِ
إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ
نُزِقَهُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ تَشَاءٍ
وَقَوَّى كُلَّ دِينٍ عَلَيْهِمْ
«- قَالُوا لَنْ يَتْرُقَ فَتْرَىٰ سَرَقَ أَخٌ
لَّهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ»
فَاسْتَرَاهَا يُوسُفُ فِي نَفْسِهِ
وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ

1743. The Arabic word here used is *wi'ān*, plural *aw'iya*, which includes bags, lookers, boxes, or any receptacles in which things are stored. Notice the appropriateness of the words used. The cup was concealed in a saddle-bag (*raḥl*), verse 70 above. When it comes to searching, they must search *all* the baggage of every description if the search was to be convincing and effective.

1744. It refers to the drinking cup, the *siqāyat*, which is a feminine noun: hence the feminine pronoun (*hā*) in Arabic.

1745. Let no one suppose that it was a vulgar or wicked trick, such as we sometimes hear of in police courts, when property is planted on innocent men to get them into trouble. On the contrary it was a device or stratagem whose purpose was to show up wickedness in its true colours, to give it a chance of repentance, to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation, to give solace to the aged father who had suffered so much, and above all, to further that larger plan for the instruction of the world, which is unfolded in Israel's religious history. Joseph was a man of God, but he could not have carried out this plan or taken the first step, of detaining his brother, except with the will and permission of God, Whose Plan is universal and for all His creatures.

1746. If we examine this world's affairs, there are all sorts of plans, and all degrees of folly and wisdom. The wicked ones plan; the foolish ones plan; the simple ones plan; then there are men who think themselves wise and are perhaps thought to be wise, but who are foolish, and they have their plans: and there are degrees of real and beneficent wisdom among men. God, the Universal Planner, is above all. Anything good in our wisdom is but a reflection of His wisdom, and His wisdom can even turn folly and wickedness to good.

1747. The hatred of the Ten for Joseph and Benjamin comes out again. They are not only ready to believe evil of Benjamin, but they carry their thoughts back to Joseph and call him a thief as well. They had injured Joseph; and by a false charge of this kind they save their conscience. Little did they suspect that Joseph was before them under another guise, and their falsehood and treachery would soon be exposed.

1748. There were many secrets: (1) that he was Joseph himself; (2) that his brother Benjamin knew him; (3) that there was no guilt in Benjamin, but the whole practical joke was in furtherance of a great plan (see n. 1745 above); (4) that they were giving themselves away, and were unconsciously facilitating the plan, though their motives were not above-board.

He (simply) said (to himself :
 "Ye are the worse situated ;¹⁷⁴⁹
 And God knoweth best
 The truth of what ye assert ! "

78. **They** said : " Oh exalted
 one !¹⁷⁵⁰

Behold ! he has a father,
 Aged and venerable, (who will
 Grieve for him) ; so take
 One of us in his place ;
 For we see that thou art
 (Gracious) in doing good."

79. He said : "God forbid
 That we take other than him
 With whom we found
 Our property : indeed
 (If we did so), we should
 Be acting wrongfully.¹⁷⁵¹

SECTION 10.

80. **Now** when they saw
 No trace of his (yielding),
 They held a conference in private.
 The leader among them said :¹⁷⁵²
 "Know ye not that your father
 Did take an oath from you
 In God's name, and how,
 Before this, ye did fail

قَالَ أَنْتُمْ تَكُونُونَ
 وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُونَ ○

٨٨- قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ إِنَّ لَكَ أَتَا
 شَيْنًا كَبِيرًا
 فَخُذْ أَحَدَنَا مَكَانَهُ
 إِنَّا نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ○

٨٩- قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَنْ نَأْخُذَ إِلَّا مَنْ
 وَجَدْنَا مَتَاعَنَا عِنْدَهُ
 إِنَّا إِذًا لَظَالِمُونَ ○

٩٠- فَلَمَّا اسْتَمْتَعُوا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوا كُلَّ
 قَوْمٍ كَبِيرٍ هُمْ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ آبَاءَكُمْ
 قَدْ أَخَذُوا عَلَيْكُمْ مَوْثِقًا مِنَ اللَّهِ
 وَمِنْ قَبْلُ مَا فَرَّظْتُمْ

1749. "Ah!" thought Joseph, "you think that Benjamin is safely out of the way, and that Joseph was got rid of long since! Would you be surprised to know that you have given yourselves away, that you are now in the power of Joseph, and that Joseph is the very instrument of your exposure and (let us hope) of your repentance?"

1750. I have translated the title of *Asīs* here as "the exalted one" when addressed to Joseph, in order not to cause confusion with the other man, the *Aziz* to whom Zulaikha was married, and who is apparently no longer now in the land of the living. See xii. 30 above, and notes 1677 and 1714.

1751. There is a little sparring now between the Ten and Joseph. They are afraid of meeting their father's wrath, and he holds them strictly to the bargain which they had themselves suggested.

1752. *Kabīr* may mean the eldest. But in xii. 78 above, *Kabīr* is distinguished from *Shaiikh*, and I have translated the one as "venerable" and the other as "aged". In xx. 71, *Kabīr* obviously means "leader" or "chief", and has no reference to age. I therefore translate here by the word "leader", that brother among them who took the most active part in these transactions. His name is not given in the Qurān. The eldest brother was Reuben. But according to the biblical story the brother who had taken the most active part in this transaction was Judah, one of the elder brothers, being the fourth son, after Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, and of the same mother as these. It was Judah who stood surety to Jacob for Benjamin (Gen. xliii. 9). It is therefore natural that Judah should, as here, offer to stay behind.

In your duty with Joseph?
Therefore will I not leave
This land until my father
Permits me, or God¹⁷⁵³
Commands me; and He
Is the best to command.

فِي يَوْسُفَ قُلْنَا أَبْرِءِ الْأَرْضَ
حَتَّى يَأْذُنَ لِي أَبِي أَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ لِي
وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ○

81. "Turn ye back to your father,
And say, 'Oh our father!
Behold! thy son committed theft!
We bear witness only to what
We know, and we could not
Well guard against the unseen!¹⁷⁵⁴

اِنَّ رَجَعْنَا إِلَىٰ آبَائِنَا لَآثِمًا
بِثَنكِ سَرَقٍ وَ مَا شَهِدْنَا اِلَّا بِمَا عَلَّمْنَا
وَمَا كُنَّا لِغَيْبٍ حَافِظِينَ ○

82. "Ask at the town where
We have been and the caravan
In which we returned,
And (you will find) we are
Indeed telling the truth."¹⁷⁵⁵

وَسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا
وَالْعِيرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا
وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ○

83. Jacob said: "Nay, but ye
Have yourselves contrived
A story (good enough) for you.¹⁷⁵⁶
So patience is most fitting
(For me). Maybe God will
Bring them (back) all
To me (in the end).¹⁷⁵⁷
For He is indeed full
Of knowledge and wisdom."

أَمْ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً
فَصَبِّرْ وَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ
عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعاً
إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ○

1753. The pledge he had given was to his father, and in God's name. Therefore he was bound both to his father, and to God. He must await his father's orders and remain here as pledged, unless God opened out some other way. For example the Egyptian Wazir might relent: if so, he could go back with Benjamin to his father, and his pledge would be satisfied.

1754. 'He stole in secret and without our knowledge. How could we in the circumstances prevent it?' This may have been a good statement for the other nine brothers, but Judah was himself personally and specially pledged.

1755. To vouch for the truth of the story, the nine brothers are asked by Judah to appeal to their father to enquire at the place where they stayed and the caravan with which they came, and he would find that the facts were as they stated them. The nine brothers came back and told their father as they had been instructed by Judah.

1756. Jacob was absolutely stunned by the story. He knew his darling little Benjamin too well to believe that he had committed theft. He flatly refused to believe it, and called it a cock-and-bull story, which indeed it was, though not in the sense in which he reproached the nine brothers. With the eye of faith he saw clearly the innocence of Benjamin, though he did not see every detail of what had happened.

1757. With the eye of faith he clung to even a larger hope. Perhaps all three of his lost sons would come back,—Joseph, Benjamin, and Judah. His faith in God was unswerving, although alas! the present facts altogether unmanned him.

84. And he turned away from them,
And said: "How great
Is my grief for Joseph!
And his eyes became white¹⁷⁵³
With sorrow, and he fell
Into silent melancholy.

٨٤- وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسْفَى عَلَى يُوسُفَ
وَإَيْحَسَّتْ عَيْنُهُ مِنَ الْحُزَنِ
فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ○

85. They said: "By God!
(Never) wilt thou cease
To remember Joseph
Until thou reach the last
Extremity of illness,
Or until thou die!"¹⁷⁵⁹

٨٥- قَالُوا تَاللّٰهِ تَفْتُنَا
تَذْكُرُ يُوسُفَ حَتَّى تَكُونَ حَرَضًا أَوْ يَكُونُ
مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ ○

86. He said: "I only complain¹⁷⁶⁰
Of my distraction and anguish
To God, and I know of God¹⁷⁶¹
That which ye know not ..

٨٦- قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُوا بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ○

87. "Oh my sons! go ye
And enquire about Joseph
And his brother, and never
Give up hope of God's
Soothing Mercy:¹⁷⁶² truly
No one despairs of God's

٨٧- يٰبَنِيَّ اذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ يُوسُفَ
وَآخِيهِ وَلَا تَأْسُوا مِنْ رُؤُوسِ اللَّهِ
إِنَّهُ لَا يَلْئِشُ مِنْ رُؤُوسِ اللَّهِ

1758. The old father's grief is indescribable. Yet with what master-strokes it is described here! One sorrow brings up the memory of another and a greater one. 'Benjamin is now gone! Oh but Joseph! his pretty dream of boyhood! his greatness foretold! and now how dark was the world! If he could but weep! Tears might give relief, and his red and swollen eyes might yet regain their light!' But his grief was too deep for tears. His eyes lost their colour, and became a dull white. The light became a mere blur, a white glimmer. Darkness seemed to cover everything. So it was in the outside world. So was it in his mind. His grief was unshared, unexpressed, and uncomplaining. Who could share it? Who could understand it? He bore his sorrow in silence. Yet his faith was undimmed, and he trimmed the lamp of patience, that sovereign virtue for those who have faith.

1759. A speech full of jealousy, taunting malice, and lack of understanding,—one that would have driven mad any one less endowed with patience and wisdom than was Jacob the man of God. It shows that the sons were still unregenerate, though the time of their repentance and reclamation was drawing nigh. The cruel heartlessness of their words is particularly out of place, as Jacob bore his sorrow in silence and complained to no mortal, but poured out his distraction and grief only to God, as stated in the next verse.

1760. Jacob's plaint to God is about himself, not about God's doings. He bewails the distraction of his mind and his occasional breaking out of those bounds of patience which he had set for himself.

1761. He knew of God's merciful and beneficent dealings with man in a way his shallow sons did not. And his perfect faith in God also told him that all would be well. He never gave up hope for Joseph, as his directions in the next verse show. They may be supposed to have been spoken after a little silence of grief and thought. That silence I have indicated in punctuation by three dots.

1762. The word is *rauh*, not *ruh*, as some translators have mistakenly construed it. *Rauh* includes the idea of a Mercy that stills or calms our distracted state, and is particularly appropriate here in the mouth of Jacob.

Soothing Mercy, except
Those who have no faith." 1763

88. Then, when they came
(Back) into (Joseph's) presence 1764
They said: "Oh exalted one!
Distress has seized us
And our family: we have
(Now) brought but scanty capital:
So pay us full measure,
(We pray thee), and treat it
As charity to us: for God
Doth reward the charitable."

89. He said: "Know ye
How ye dealt with Joseph 1765
And his brother, not knowing
(What ye were doing)?"

90. They said: "Art thou indeed 1766
Joseph?" He said: "I am
Joseph, and this is my brother:
God has indeed been gracious

إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ○

٨٨- فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ
قَالُوا يَا كُنْهَ الْعَزِيزُ مَسَّنَا
وَأَهْلُنَا الطُّرُوجُنَا بِيضَاعَةٍ مُزْجِلَةٍ
فَاَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ ○

٨٩- قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوسُفَ
وَإِخْوَتِهِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ جَاهِلُونَ ○

٩٠- قَالُوا أَمْ إِنَّا لَأَنتَ يُوسُفُ قَالَ أَنَا
يُوسُفُ وَهَذَا أَخِي قَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا

1763. Jacob ignores and forgives the sting and malice in the speech of his sons, and like a true man of God, still wishes them well, gives them sound advice, and sends them on an errand which is to open their eyes to the wonderful ways of Providence as much as it will bring consolation to his own distressed soul. He asks them to go again in search of Joseph and Benjamin. Perhaps by now he had an idea that they might be together in Egypt. In any case their stock of grain is again low, and they must seek its replenishment in Egypt.

1764. The nine brothers come back to Egypt according to their father's direction. Their first care is to see the Wazir. They must tell him of all their father's distress and excite his pity, if perchance he might release Benjamin. They would describe the father's special mental distress as well as the distress which was the common lot of all in famine time. They had spent a great part of their capital and stock-in-trade. They would appeal to his charity. It might please so great a man, the absolute governor of a wealthy state. And they did so. Perhaps they mentioned their father's touching faith, and that brought Joseph out of his shell, as in the next verse.

1765. Joseph now wants to reveal himself and touch their conscience. He had but to remind them of the true facts as to their treatment of their brother Joseph, whom they pretended to have lost. He had by now also learnt from Benjamin what slights and injustice he too had suffered at their hands after Joseph's protection had been removed from him in their home. Had not Joseph himself seen them but too prone to believe the worst of Benjamin and to say the worst of Joseph? But Joseph would be charitable,—not only in the sense which they meant when they asked for a charitable grant of grain, but in a far higher sense. He would forgive them and put the most charitable construction on what they did,—that they knew not what they were doing!

1766. Their father's words, the way events were shaping themselves, Joseph's questionings, perhaps Benjamin's manner now,—not a slave kept in subjection but one in perfect love and understanding with this great Wazir,—perhaps also a recollection of Joseph's boyish dream,—all these things had prepared their minds and they ask the direct question, "Art thou Joseph?" They get the direct reply, "Yes, I am Joseph; and if you have still any doubt of my identity, here is Benjamin: ask him. We have suffered much, but patience and right conduct are at last rewarded by God!"

To us (all): behold, he that is
Righteous and patient,—never
Will God suffer the reward
To be lost, of those
Who do right."

91. They said: "By God! Indeed
Has God preferred thee
Above us, and we certainly
Have been guilty of sin!" 1767

92. He said: "This day
Let no reproach be (cast) 1768
On you: God will forgive you,
And He is the Most Merciful
Of those who show mercy!

93. "Go with this my shirt, 1769
And cast it before the face
Of my father: he will
Come to see (clearly). Then come
Ye (here) to me together
With all your family."

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَنْ يَتَّقِي وَيَصْبِرُ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ○

٩١- قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا
وَإِنْ لَكُنَا تُخْطِئِينَ ○

٩٢- قَالَ لَا تَثْرِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ
يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ○

٩٣- إِذْ هَبُوا بَقِيَّةَ جُودِي هَذَا فَأَلْقُوهَا عَلَى
وَجْهِ أَبِي يَأْتِ بَصِيرًا
وَأْتُونِي بِأَهْلِكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ○

C. 113.—Jacob was comforted with the news.

- (xii. 94-111.) The whole family moved to Egypt,
Where Joseph received them with honour.
He forgave his brothers, thanked and praised
God, and lived and died a righteous man.
So the story shows how the Plan of God
Doth work without fail: it defeats
The wiles of the wicked, turns evil to good,

1767. The scales fall from the eyes of the brothers. We may suppose that they had joined Judah at this interview, and perhaps what Judah had seen when he was alone helped in the process of their enlightenment. They are convicted of sin out of their own mouths, and now there is no *arrière pensée*, no reserve thought, in their minds. They freely confess their wrong-doing, and the justice of Joseph's preferment.

1768. Joseph is most generous. He is glad that they have at last seen the significance of what happened. But he will not allow them at this great moment of reconciliation to dwell on their conduct with reproaches against themselves. 'There is more urgent work to do. An aged and beloved father is eating out his heart in far Canaan in love and longing for his Joseph, and he must be told all immediately, and "comforted in body, mind, and estate," and so he tells the brothers to hurry back immediately with his shirt as a sign of recognition, as a proof of these wonderful happenings.

1769. It will be remembered that they had covered their crime by taking his shirt, putting on the stains of blood, and pretending that he had been killed by a wolf: see above, xii. 17-18. Now that they have confessed their crime and been forgiven, and they have joyful news to tell Jacob about Joseph, Joseph gives them another shirt of his to prove the truth of their story. It is a rich shirt, befitting a ruler of Egypt, to prove his good fortune, and yet perhaps its design and many colours (xii. 18, n. 1651) were reminiscent of the lost Joseph. The first shirt plunged Jacob into grief. This one will now restore him. See the verses following.

And ever leads those who are true
To beatitudes undreamt of. So
Did it happen in Mustafā's life.
Will man not learn to rely on God
As the only Reality, turning away
From all that is fleeting or untrue?

SECTION 11.

94. ~~When~~ When the Caravan left (Egypt),
Their father said: "I do indeed
Scent the presence of Joseph: ¹⁷⁷⁰
Nay, think me not a dotard."

٩٤- وَلَقَدْ فَصَّلْتُ الْوَيْلُ قَالَ أَبُوهُمْ إِنِّي
لَأَجِدُ رِيحَ يُوسُفَ لَوْلَا أَنْ تُفَكِّدُونِ

95. They ¹⁷⁷¹ said: "By God!
Truly thou art in
Thine old wandering mind."

٩٥- قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلَالِكَ الْقَدِيمِ

96. Then when the bearer ¹⁷⁷²
Of the good news came,
He cast (the shirt)
Before his face, and he
Forthwith ¹⁷⁷³ regained clear
sight. ¹⁷⁷⁴

٩٦- فَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْقَاهُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ
فَارْتَدَّ بِصَدْرٍ
قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ
إِنِّي أَغْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ
مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

He said: "Did I not say
To you, 'I know of God
That which ye know not?' " ¹⁷⁷⁵

1770. Literally, 'I feel the scent, or the air, or the atmosphere or the breath of Joseph'; for ^{٩٤} has all these significations. Or we might translate, 'I feel the presence of Joseph in the air'. When a long-lost friend is about to be found or heard or, many people have a sort of presentiment of it, which they call telepathy. In Jacob's case it was more definite. He had always had faith that Joseph was living and that his dream would be realised. Now that faith was proved true by his own sons; they had been undutiful, and hard, and ignorant; and circumstances had converged to prove it to them by ocular demonstration. Jacob's soul was more sensitive. No wonder he knew already before the news was actually brought to him.

1771. "They" must be the people around him, before the brothers actually arrived. These same brothers had sedulously cultivated the calumny that their father was an old dotard, and everybody around believed it, even after its authors had to give it up. Thus lies die hard, once they get a start.

1772. We may suppose this to have been Judah (see notes 1752 and 1753 above) who was pledged to his father for Benjamin, and who could now announce the good news not only of Benjamin but of Joseph. We can imagine him hurrying forward, to be the first to tell the news, though the plural pronoun for those whom Jacob addresses in this verse, and for those who reply in the next verse, shows that all the brothers practically arrived together.

1773. The particle *fa* ("then") has here the force of "forthwith".

1774. Jacob's sight had grown dim; his eyes had become white with much sorrow for Joseph (see xii. 84 above). His mind had also become dark and distracted (xii. 85). Both his physical and mental vision now became clear and bright as before.

1775. He had said this (xii. 86) when everything was against him, and his sons were scoffers. Now they themselves have come to say that his faith was justified and his vision was true.

97. They said : " Oh our father !
Ask for us forgiveness
For our sins, for we
Were truly at fault."
98. He said : " Soon ¹⁷⁷⁶ will I
Ask my Lord for forgiveness
For you : for He is indeed
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."
99. ~~Then~~ when they entered ¹⁷⁷⁷
The presence of Joseph,
He provided a home
For his parents with himself,
And said : " Enter ye ¹⁷⁷⁸
Egypt (all) in safety
If it please God."
100. And he raised his parents
High on the throne (of dignity), ¹⁷⁷⁹
And they fell down in prostration,
(All) before him. He said :
" Oh my father ! this is
The fulfilment of my vision
Of old ! God hath made it
Come true ! He was indeed
Good to me when He
Took me out of prison

٩٧- قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا
إِنَّا كُنَّا خَاطِئِينَ ○

٩٨- قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي
إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ○

٩٩- فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ
أَوَى الْبَيْتَ أَبُوهُ
وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ
أَمِينٌ ○

١٠٠- وَرَفَعَهُ الْبُوتِيفُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ
وَحَضَرُوا لَهُ سُبُحًا وَقَالَ
يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ
مِن قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلْنَا لِي فِي حَقِّكَ وَقَدْ
أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجْتَنِي مِنَ السِّبْطِ

1776. He fully intended to do this, but the most injured party was Joseph, and it was only fair that Joseph should be consulted. In fact Joseph had already forgiven his brothers all their past, and his father could confidently look forward to Joseph joining in the wish of the whole family to turn to God through their aged father Jacob in his prophetic office.

1777. At length the whole family arrived in Egypt and were re-united with Joseph. They were all entertained and provided with homes. But the parents were treated with special honour, as was becoming both to Joseph's character and ordinary family ethics. His mother Rachel had long been dead, but he had been brought up by his mother's sister Leah, whom his father had also married. Leah was now his mother. They were lodged with Joseph himself.

1778. This is in Arabic in the plural, not in the dual number. The welcome is for all to Egypt, and under the auspices of the Wazir of Egypt. They came, therefore, under God's will, to a double sense of security : Egypt was secure from the famine unlike the neighbouring countries ; and they were to be cared for by the highest in the land.

1779. Certainly metaphorically : probably also literally. By Eastern custom the place of honour at a ceremonial reception is on a seat on a dais, with a special cushion of honour, such as is assigned to a bridegroom at his reception. To show his high respect for his parents, Joseph made them sit on a throne of dignity. On the other hand, his parents and his brothers,—all performed the ceremony of prostration before Joseph in recognition of his supreme rank in Egypt under the Pharaoh. And thus was fulfilled the dream or vision of his youth (xii. 4 above, and n. 1633).

102. Such is one of the stories
Of what happened unseen,¹⁷⁸⁴
Which We reveal by inspiration
Unto thee: nor wast thou¹⁷⁸⁵
(Present) with them when they
Concerted their plans together
In the process of weaving their
plots.

١٠٢- ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ
تُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ
وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ
إِذْ اجْتَمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُونَ ۝

103. Yet no faith will
The greater part of mankind
Have, however ardently
Thou dost desire it.¹⁷⁸⁶

١٠٣- وَمَا أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ
وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

104. And no reward dost thou ask
Of them for this: it is
No less than a Message
For all creatures.¹⁷⁸⁷

١٠٤- وَمَا تَسْأَلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ
إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ۝

SECTION 12.

105. And how many Signs
In the heavens and the earth

١٠٥- وَكَانُوا مِنْ آيَةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

1784. The story is finished. But is it a story? It is rather a recital of forces and motives, thoughts and feelings, complications and results, ordinarily not seen by men. However much they concert their plans and unite their forces, whatever dark plots they back with all their resources,—the plan of God works irresistibly, and sweeps away all their machinations. The good win through in the end, but not always as they planned; the evil are foiled, and often their very plots help the good. What did the brothers desire in trying to get rid of Joseph, and what actually happened? How did Zulaikha form an image of her love, what false traps and sins did it not lead her into, and how, through it all, by her constancy and faith, did she see her way to a higher, nobler, and purer love? How wrong was it of the cup-bearer to forget Joseph, and yet how his very forgetfulness kept Joseph safe and undisturbed in prison until the day came when he should tackle the great problems of Pharaoh's kingdom? With every character in the story there are problems, and the whole is a beautifully balanced picture of the working of God's providence in man's chequered destiny.

1785. The holy Apostle was no actor in those scenes; yet by inspiration he was able to expound them in the divine light, as they had never been expounded before, whether in the Pentateuch or by any Seer before him. And allegorically they figured his own story,—how his own brethren sought to betray and kill him, how by God's providence he was not only saved but he won through, and how his own friends misconceived their love for him and had to be taught that true love which transcends sex and self. Of such a dream of love Plato had an inkling.

1786. In spite of such an exposition and such a convincing illustration, how few men really have true faith,—such a faith as Jacob had in the old story, or Muhammad the Chosen One had, in the story which was actually unfolding itself on the world's stage when this Sura was revealed, shortly before the Hijrat? Mustafa's ardent wish and faith was to save his people and all mankind from the graceless condition of want of faith. But his efforts were flouted, and he had to leave his home and suffer all kinds of persecution; but, like Joseph, and more than Joseph, he was marked out for great work, which he finally achieved.

1787. The divine Message was priceless; it was not for the Messenger's personal profit, nor did he ask of men any reward for bringing it for their benefit. It was for all creatures,—literally, for all the worlds, as explained in i., ii. n. 20.

Do they pass by? Yet they
Turn (their faces) away from
them! 1788

يُزَوِّنُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنفُسُهُمْ يَئُودُونَ

106. And most of them
Believe not in God
Without associating (others
As partners) with Him! 1789

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ
إِلَّا وَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ لَهُ

107. Do they then feel secure
From the coming against them
Of the covering veil 1790
Of the wrath of God,—
Or of the coming against them
Of the (final) Hour
All of a sudden 1791
While they perceive not?

أَفَأَمِنُوا أَن تَأْتِيَهُمْ
غَاشِيَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ
أَوْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْثَةً
وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

108. Say thou: "This is my Way:
I do invite unto God,—
On evidence clear as
The seeing with one's eyes,— 1792

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ
عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي

1788. Not only can we learn through Scripture of the working of God's providence in human history and the history of individual souls. His Signs are scattered literally throughout nature—throughout Creation—for all who have eyes to see. And yet man is so arrogant that he turns away his very eyes from them!

1789. Even if people profess a nominal faith in God, they corrupt it by believing in other things as if they were God's partners, or had some share in the shaping of the world's destinies! In some circles, it is idolatry, the worship of stocks and stones. In others, it is Christolatry and Mariolatry, or the deification of heroes and men of renown. In others it is the powers of Nature or of Life, or of the human intellect personified in Science or Art or invention, and this is the more common form of modern idolatry. Others again worship mystery, or imaginary powers of good or even evil: greed and fear are mixed up with these forms of worship. Islam calls us to worship the One True God, and Him only.

1790. *Gāshiyat*=covering veil, pall; used for the Judgment to come, which will be so dark and appalling as to hide up all other petty things, and be the one great reality for the souls that were slaves to evil.

1791. The metaphor is changed, from intensity of darkness to suddenness of time. It will come before they are aware of it. Let them not feel any sense of safety in sin.

1792. Islam holds fast to the one central fact in the spiritual world,—the unity of God, and all Reality springing from Him and Him alone. There can be no one and nothing in competition with that one and only Reality. It is the essence of Truth. All other ideas or existences, including our perception of Self, are merely relative,—mere projections from the wonderful faculties which He has given to us. This is not, to us, mere hypothesis. It is in our inmost experience. In the physical world, they say that seeing is believing. In our inner world this sense of God is as clear as sight in the physical world. Therefore, *Muṣṭafā* and those who really follow him in the truest sense of the word, call all the world to see this Truth, feel this experience, follow this Way. They will never be distracted by metaphysical speculations, whose validity will always be doubtful, nor be deluded with phantoms which lead men astray.

I and whoever follows me.
Glory to God! and never
Will I join gods with God! "

109. Nor did We send before thee
(As apostles) any but men,¹⁷⁹³
Whom We did inspire,—
(Men) living in human habitations.
Do they not travel
Through the earth, and see
What was the end
Of those before them?
But the home of the Hereafter¹⁷⁹⁴
Is best, for those who do right.
Will ye not then understand?

110. (Respite will be granted)
Until, when the apostles
Give up hope (of their people)
And (come to) think that they
Were treated as liars,¹⁷⁹⁵
There reaches them Our help,
And those whom We will
Are delivered into safety.
But never will be warded off
Our punishment from those
Who are in sin.

111. There is, in their stories,¹⁷⁹⁶
Instruction for men endued

أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَشُجِّنَ اللَّهُ وَمَا أَنَا
مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ○

١٠٩- وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا
نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى
أَلَمْ تَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
وَلَكِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا
أَلَّا تَعْلَمُونَ ○

١١٠- حَتَّىٰ لَمَّا اسْتَيْسَسَ الرُّسُلُ
وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِّبُوا
بِجَاءِ هُمْ نَصْرًا مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ
وَلَا يَرَوْا بَاسًا
عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ○

١١١- لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي

1793. It was men that God sent as His Messengers to explain Him to men. He did not send angels or gods. Into His chosen men He breathed His inspiration, so that they could see truer than other men. But they were men living with men,—in men's habitations in town or country; not recluses or cenobites, who had no personal experience of men's affairs and could not be teachers of men in the fullest sense. Their deeds tell their own tale.

1794. The righteous, the men of God, had, as in Joseph's history, some evidence of God's providence in this very world, with all its imperfections as reflecting our imperfections. But this world is of no real consequence to them. Their home is in the Hereafter. Joseph's earthly home was in Canaan: but he attained his glory elsewhere; and his spiritual Home is in the great Society of the Righteous (iii. 39).

1795. *Ẓannū* (come to think): I construe the nominative of this verb to be "the apostles" in agreement with the best authorities. *Kuṣṣibū* is the usual reading, though *Kuṣṣibū*, the alternative reading, also rests on good authority. I construe the meaning to be: that God gives plenty of rope to the wicked (as in Joseph's story) until His own Messengers feel almost that it will be hopeless to preach to them and come to consider themselves branded as liars by an unbelieving world; that the breaking-point is then reached; that God's help then comes swiftly to His men, and they are delivered from persecution and danger, while the wrath of God overtakes sinners, and nothing can then ward it off. This interpretation has good authority behind it, though there are differences of opinion.

1796. *Their stories*: i.e., the stories of the apostles or of the wicked; for the two threads intertwine, as in Joseph's story.

APPENDIX VI

Allegorical Interpretation of the Story of Joseph.

(Sūra xii.)

Spiritual things can only be understood by symbols taken from things which are familiar to us in this life. In a sense this fleeting life itself is a symbol. History is a symbol. The whole phenomenal world is a symbol. The reality lies behind it, like the real light behind the Cave, in Plato's Theory of Ideas. This is not to say that Islam agrees with the Vedantists in calling this whole visible world an illusion. It is an illusion to suppose that it is the only world. But it is equally an illusion to suppose that this world is of no consequence. It is of as much consequence as our thoughts, feelings, dreams, and Life. We have to make use of them, study and respect their laws, and obey the duties imposed on us by the spiritual part of us being entangled in their chain. But they are not eternal, and they will pass away. Our duty is to prepare ourselves for the truer life, the eternal life: we emancipate ourselves from them, not by fleeing them (for that is impossible), but by fulfilling our obligations in them, as an apprentice or probationer attains his real position by completing his apprenticeship or probation satisfactorily and so ceasing to be an apprentice or probationer.

From this point of view there is an allegorical meaning in all experience, history, and spiritual teaching. The temporary relationships, the fleeting events, our triumphs, defeats, and difficulties in this phenomenal world, are the bridges through which we pass to the higher world. Our temporal experiences are the foundation on which our greater and real Life is built up. This greater and real Life is not merely a thing of the future. It is within us all the time, if we only seek its truer light and try to fulfil our lower and temporal functions by the more stable principles with which it furnishes us.

The glimpses of the spiritual Joseph, as I understand them, in the Qur-ān, are afforded us "in order that we may learn wisdom" (xii. 2). Stories, events, visions, dreams, seem all to be assimilated under the Arabic word *Aḥādīth*. The real ones among them (as opposed to futile fancies) have all an inner meaning. It is only given to a few choicer spirits to understand and expound them. Joseph was one of these choicer spirits. From his boyhood he had an inner vision which he treasured up in his mind. Its meaning—or full meaning—only dawned on him afterwards. When it did, he was able to fulfil his mission in life.

This mission had many aspects. His father Jacob was also a Seer or Prophet, but Joseph in his maturity surpassed him in rank, and Joseph's life and filial love were as it were necessary to his father to complete and crown the full achievement of his life. Then Joseph, among his ten half-brothers and one full brother, had a protective and guiding mission. To Benjamin, his one full brother, and the youngest in the family, he was almost like a father when Jacob reached old age and resigned the headship of the family. The other brothers reflect all the pettiness, wickedness, jealousy, spite, hatred, injustice, and lower propensities of human life, combined with the latent reasonableness and the capacity to repent and turn over a new leaf, which it was Joseph's mission to awaken at the expense of much suffering to himself. The

ten brothers, are shown to us collectively as acting as a human social group, with all their arrogance based on numbers and physical strength, and contempt of older and wiser experience. But we are also shown how the better side of human nature sometimes struggles to assert itself as against the baser and grosser standards of mass mentality, as when one of them advised them not to take Joseph's life (xii. 10), and again, later, when one of them felt ashamed to show himself before his father without Benjamin and offered to stay behind if perchance he could release Benjamin (xii. 78, 80). But it will be noticed that in both cases there was a good deal of alloy with the gold. The better nature of the individual has always a hard fight against the lower collective standards, which to unregenerate human nature seem to be the last word in morality, like the herd instinct in the lower animals. This is also shown in the actions and reactions between Zulaikhā and the Society women. Sometimes Zulaikhā was almost on the point of seeing the error of her ways, when her passion is inflamed and her higher nature suppressed by the bitter taste of what the world says and the discovery that those who cast the first stone at a delinquent would be the first to take all the so-called enjoyment of the sin which they are so prompt to reprobate in others.

To the merchants who found and purchased Joseph, the handsome young slave, of winning ways was indeed "a treasure" (xii. 19). They understood that treasure in a material and grasping commercial spirit, but no doubt the road journey from Canaan to the Egyptian capital showed them the divinely-inspired virtuous side of Joseph, and it is impossible to suppose that they had not much spiritual profit out of it. The 'Aziz of Egypt, the high official who bought him, expected much good out of him, wanted to treat him with honour, and adopt him as a son (xii. 21). He no doubt saw (if but vaguely) the moral and spiritual grandeur of Joseph, but his highest privilege (though he may not have known it) was that he was able to be the instrument by which Joseph was "established in the land" (xii. 21); and that through him the strange, romantic, wholly feminine character of Zulaikhā was brought into touch with her ideal, and through sorrow, suffering, sin, and repentance, was at last able to catch a glimpse of that heavenly love of which she had dreamed and which she had so much misunderstood under the stress of human passion. On Zulaikhā our romantic Ṣūfī poetry has concentrated its attention in the story of Joseph, and of this we shall speak presently. In the 'Aziz's house Joseph attained his full manhood and endowment of Power and Knowledge from God (xii. 22). In her ardent way as a sinner Zulaikhā had a share in Joseph's development, for his virtue was tried through her beauty and passion and emerged triumphant.

The Society ladies who taunted Zulaikhā represent the prudish element in femininity. The contest between the jealous, prude and the frank, impulsive victim of ardent love is well-figured in the relations between the ladies and Zulaikhā right to the end. Calculating hypocrisy and intolerant slander are farther from true love than a misconceived desire in earthly love, and this point is well brought out in Joseph's story. The ladies, when they cut their fingers at Zulaikhā's feast, are the type of women who figuratively cut their souls in straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel.

Joseph's slavery and prison are the types of what a righteous man has to suffer through the sins and follies of others, in order (1) that he may bring some good to others, and (2) that he may develop his own character and high destiny. Without sorrow, suffering and striving—spiritual *jihād*—even the best men cannot reach their full stature. Through them we are taught a true sense of values. The

slave must work, must labour, not for himself, but for others. If he does it in the right spirit, he exposes the hollowness of idleness, the ridiculous position of arrogance, and the futility of power which permits injustice. The prisoner who being innocent is put into a human prison enlarges his own spiritual liberty and opportunity, and perhaps shows up by contrast the darker and more impenetrable prison in whose grip his unjust incarcerators are held. The test is whether the innocent man who is put into prison or subjection is able to hold up his head. If so, he is able to achieve Burns's ideal, "Preserve the dignity of man, with soul erect": for the *Tawakkul* of Islam will have made it a part of his nature to know for certain that "the Universal Plan will all protect."

The spiritual benefit which the two fellow-prisoners derived from Joseph's spiritual influence is explained in the notes to xii. 36-40. And then comes the period of Joseph's exaltation in worldly position, his strenuous administration of Egypt during fourteen eventful years, and perhaps to the end of his life, his opportunities to make the Pharaoh's power real and beneficent, instead of a mere simulacrum and a nerveless show, behind which lurked injustice and oppression. There is also the touching reunion of the family. The little artifice by which Joseph induces the brothers to confess their own hatred and spite (xii. 77) leads to their own self-exposure, preparatory to their repentance and forgiveness. On this and innumerable other points whole volumes could be written. But I will now pass on to Zulaikhā and her treatment in our mystic-romantic poetry, for it forms an interesting commentary on what Islam has understood from one episode in Joseph's career.

In almost all Islamic languages the romance of Yūsuf and Zulaikhā has justly attracted much attention in mystic poetry. Perhaps the order of the names should really be reversed and the romance should be called that of Zulaikhā and Yūsuf. In Persian the great Firdausī tried his hand at it. But the great masterpiece is that of Jāmi whose dates fall between A.H. 817 and 898, equivalent to A.D. 1414-1492. I consider it one of the masterpieces of the world's literature. There is a good German translation by Rosenzweig and an English translation by R. T. H. Griffith. The translation by A. Rogers is not so good. The Urdu translations which I have seen are not worth mention. The original Persian is so grand and instructive that it is a pity that our Islamic students do not study it with the attention which it deserves. I shall give a very brief account of the version as developed by Jāmi: where I quote in English verse, I shall use Griffith's version (of 1881).

According to Jāmi, Zulaikhā is a beautiful Princess, a daughter of a king of the West (*Magrib*). In her youth she dreamt a dream, in which she saw a handsome man, as noble and true as he was handsome, and she fell in love with him. So deep and constant was her love that she pined away for the love of the ideal man of her dream. She nursed her love and sorrow in secret, making only her nurse her confidante, in the hope that the nurse might by her secret arts procure a meeting with the dear love of her dreams. She had a second and a third dream, and in the third, she had the courage to ask the man in the vision his name and country. He did not tell her his name, but he said he was the Wazīr of Egypt.

Armed with this clue, Zulaikhā refused all offers of marriage from kings and princes, cherishing in her heart only the image of the man she had seen in her dream, who she had learnt was the Wazīr of Egypt. At length her father is induced to send a wise man to Egypt, to arrange the marriage with the Wazīr, though he could not understand why the Princess should have refused the offers of kings and princes from

all over the world. The wise man interviews the Wazir of Egypt, who is torn internally with many feelings. Here was a Princess who had refused the offers of great kings. His ambition was all aflame. How could he refuse? Yet he knew his own condition. He was a eunuch. How could he accept? He pleaded that the king of Egypt needed him so much that he could not be absent a single hour. But he would send 200 golden litters and 1000 slave-girls to wait on Zulaikhā and convey her with honour to Egypt. The agent of Zulaikhā's father knew that Zulaikhā's heart was so set upon the Wazir of Egypt that it would be death to her if she could not get him. So he arranged the match and returned with what he supposed was good news. And Zulaikhā, too, was delighted. Her bliss knew no bounds. She now, she thought, had the prospect of union with the man of her dreams. Thus, moralises the Poet, our joys and sorrows come from dreams and fancies!

Great preparations were made for Zulaikhā's bridal procession to Egypt. Zulaikhā's litter was carved with aloe and sandalwood; its roof was resplendent with gems and gold like Jamshid's tent: its curtains were hung with gold brocade. And in it was Zulaikhā, radiant and happy that she was now going to meet the lord of her love, whom she knew from her dreams, and to whom she would now be united for ever. When they approached the Egyptian capital, the Wazir came out to meet his bride with a splendid equipage. Zulaikhā was all eagerness to feast her eyes with a sight of her beloved. She peeped through a hole in her curtain, when lo! she was full of dismay. This Wazir was not the man of her dreams!—not the man to whom she had plighted her troth, and to whom she would be faithful for life. She had in her dreams seen the image of Yūsuf, not of this 'Azīz. Never would she give her faith or her love or her virgin honour to another. She began to bemoan her fate "*Nishindam nakhl i khurmā, khār bar-dād* (I planted a date-palm: what has come out but thorns?)" She was in utter despair. What was to be done? A voice came to her from the unseen world. It said: "True, this is not thy love! But thy desire for thy true love will be satisfied through him. Fear him not. The jewel of thy virgin honour is safe with him. If a great sleeve is shown, but there is no hand within, what is there to hold a dagger?" Zulaikhā had, of her own deliberate choice, had this marriage arranged. She must wed the eunuch. Whatever her grief, she must not complain. She went through the brilliant ceremony. But her heart was empty. It was given to the man of her dreams! And it would never be another's! And so she spent her days in outward splendour and inward grief, pining away in love unsatisfied.

At this time, perhaps, she had a glimpse of that true love in which self is blotted out. In her despair, in her anguish, she could see things which were later obscured to her in her pride and in the allurements of her sense. She poured out her soul in music. She had faith. "Surely," she thought, "thou gavest me no lying vision! Why didst thou call thyself Wazir of Egypt? And I left my home and country to be with thee, to be thine! I know I shall win thee in the end! When that happy day comes, I shall be not I, but thou! May I see thee soon!"

"I shall roll up the carpet of life when I see
Thy dear face again, and shall cease to be;
For self will be lost in that rapture, and all
The threads of my thought from my hand will fall;
Not Me wilt thou find, for this Self will have fled;
Thou wilt be my soul in mine own soul's stead.

All thought of Self will be swept from my mind,
 And Thee, only, Thee, in my place shall it find ;
 More precious than heaven, than earth more dear,
 Myself were forgotten if Thou wert near."

She waited in faith and longing. At length came news of a great sensation in the market. A foreign merchant was bringing, they said, a slave the like of whom had never been seen, whether for looks, or wit, or integrity, or purity of word and mind. It was no slave, but a sun of splendour, a moon of goodness, a king in the realm of love ! The caravan had yet barely entered the city. But the king heard of it, and ordered the Wazîr (Zulaikhâ's nominal husband) to go and see and bring this new prodigy into the king's presence. When the Wazîr came to the caravan and saw Yûsuf, he found his beauty was even greater than rumour had described. He bowed down, with feelings akin to worship. But Yûsuf gently raised him and taught him the Gospel of Unity,—that worship was due to God alone. When the merchant was told of the king's order he pleaded delay on the ground that they were travel-stained and unfit to appear before the king until they had washed in the Nile and made themselves presentable.

Meanwhile the fame of Yûsuf's beauty, goodness, purity, and truth spread like wild-fire. Each one—man or woman—who possessed—or thought he or she possessed—any of these qualities even in a minute degree, grew jealous that another—a stranger and a slave—should draw away all hearts. To the merchant, the value of his "treasure" went up the more it was talked about. The king might perhaps pay the whole revenue of Egypt to purchase him. But there was one to whom Yûsuf's beauty was worth more than all the revenues of Egypt and who could outbid the king himself. This was Zulaikhâ, the lovely Princess of the West, whose jewels were worth the revenues of twenty kingdoms, but who took no pleasure in them in pining for the love of her dreams. She, too, heard of this wonderful prodigy, and came to have a peep at it through the curtains of her litter. Behold ! when she saw Yûsuf, it was the very face she had seen in her dreams,—for which she had left home and people and country, and for which she had been praying and pining these many years ! She had no doubt about it whatever. She had found her love ! But to see is not to attain. The whole rabble saw Yûsuf, and he was to be presented to the king. She told her husband to present a humble petition to the king. The king knew that he, the Wazîr, had no son and could have none. The king knew the services which he as Wazîr had rendered to the king, his dynasty, and his country. Would the king permit him to bid for this wondrous slave with the Wazîr's own money ? If so, the king would get the slave just the same, but would afford his Wazîr the happiness of having a wonderful son in his house to carry on his name ? The king saw Yûsuf and accorded the Wazîr the very reasonable request which he had made. Perhaps, though the poet does not say so, the king wondered whether the Wazîr would be able to put up the whole of the money, and may have intended benevolently to supplement the good Wazîr's resources, should the need arise.

Then came a strange scene typical of Vanity Fair. Yûsuf was put up to auction. Every petty individual thought he or she could purchase Yûsuf ! One old woman had nothing but a little yarn she had spun. "Enough," she thought, "to give me the honour of standing in the market and boasting for ever that I had bid for Yûsuf." Some came from motives of curiosity : some from motives of jealousy.

Why should the world go mad after a beauty or a virtue of a kind different from what they themselves possessed, however homely? Some came with pride of purse. "A thousand gold pieces!" they shouted as if to stifle all competition. The bid went on to a hundred times as much. Nor did it stop there. "Of fragrant musk I will give to the full weight of Yūsuf!" said one who had travelled to the uttermost ends of the earth in search of costly perfumes. "No good!" said another: "I offer the same weight of the most costly rubies and diamonds!" Poor deluded mortals! "The heaven's glorious sun" was "not to be deep-searched with saucy looks!" The Wazīr's resources—and indeed the kingdom's revenues,—had been exceeded many times already in the bidding. But Zulaikhā, the Princess of the West, had untold wealth in her casket of gems. Yūsuf was more than life itself to her. She bade the Wazīr double the highest bid. This was conclusive. Yūsuf went to the Wazīr. And poor Zulaikhā! She knew that Yūsuf was worth more than the price she had paid for him! Yet, in her feminine weakness, she thought Yūsuf had a price! She thought that her beauty, her birth, her constancy, her unflinching gift of her person to him, would weigh in the scale. Alas! even these things were not enough for Yūsuf. The sale in the phenomenal world was all illusory in the real world. As Zulaikhā had not yet learnt this, she had yet to pass through many trials, temptations, sins, and sorrows, before her grosser self could be purged out and she could be fit to receive Yūsuf. Meanwhile, he who could talk to the lowest in prison on equal terms, was unattainable to Zulaikhā. The dust of his feet had made the merchant who had looked after him fabulously wealthy, but Yūsuf was still to be the prey to many prying glances, the mark of many poisoned arrows, the quarry of many cunning traps. But his soul was spotless, and his manhood remained unsullied.

At this point, about the middle of the story, we are introduced by the poet to a mysterious figure, the lovely Bāzīga, who is in some respects a foil to Zulaikhā. Bāzīga's speech is the key to the whole allegory. She is a princess of the 'Ad race, a people of Arabian antiquity referred to in many places in the Qur-ān, and described in n. 1040 to vii. 65. She had heard of Yūsuf, and had also come with great wealth to bid for him. She had had an interview and talk with Yūsuf, and he had turned her attention from himself to the Great Creator, and given her the precious Message of Unity and Truth. 'This world of visible beauty,' he had said, 'is but the screen of the invisible and ineffable beauty within. Any beauty or goodness that you see here is but a reflection or image of the perfect, real, and eternal Beauty, Goodness, and Truth, which you should seek.' Convinced by his teaching, she resigns all folly, and bursts into a splendid rhapsody, concluding with these words:—

" Mine eyes have been touched by the Truth's pure ray,
And the dream of folly has passed away.
Mine eyes thou hast opened—God bless thee for it!—
And mine heart to the Soul of the soul thou hast knit!
From a fond strange love thou hast turned my feet,
The Lord of all creatures to know and meet;
If I bore a tongue in each single hair,
Each and all should thy praises declare!"

She resigned her wealth and her pomp, attended to the needy, and spent her days in prayer and praise on the banks of the Nile.

Zulaikhā is not of that temperament, and she reaches Truth and Peace by a different and much more thorny path. She is still in the grip of the beauty of sense. She burns with the flame of animal love, and tempts Yūsuf. He is above any passion inconsistent with truth and fidelity, but his heart is sore distressed to think that he should bring sorrow on those who loved him. His father loved him, and that caused his brothers the pain of jealousy and his father himself the pain of separation. He would gladly serve her and the Wazīr in all that was reasonable. But why seek to go beyond, on the road to evil? Zulaikhā placed all sorts of temptations in his way, but he stood firm as a rock. At length she trapped him into a garden house and made overtures to him. But he fled. She pursued, and in the struggle, tore his shirt at the back. He made good his escape. Outside the house he met the Wazīr, but he was too kindly and forbearing, too solicitous of Zulaikhā's honour to betray her or say anything of what had happened. Nor did the Wazīr press him, but taking his hand in his own, entered the house with him. Zulaikhā, seeing them thus enter, linked in mutual confidence, had a cruel and baseless suspicion—that she had been humiliated and betrayed by Yūsuf. Her guilty conscience and injured pride spurred her on to impulsive lies and false accusations. Then was Yūsuf compelled, in a few simple words, to tell so much of the truth as would save the Wazīr from committing an act of injustice—an act inconsistent with his high office. The condition of the shirt decided the matter: the Wazīr asked Zulaikhā to seek God's pardon and charged Yūsuf to say nothing more of this affair, lest the Wazīr's own position should be compromised.

Yūsuf had no need of the Wazīr's words to make him discreet. But, says the poet, it suits not love to seek a corner of safety. Zulaikhā, roused by anger and revenge, threw prudence to the winds. Her conduct accused, rather than excused, her. Tongues wagged. Society exaggerated, or distorted, the voice of rumour, itself fed on exaggeration and distortion. Society pointed the finger of scorn at her. Good, bad, or hypocritical, the ladies all reviled her. 'Shameless woman, to throw herself on her slave! And he to scorn her! What was Egypt coming to! If she had had their spirit or their charm, who could have resisted it?' Stung by their insolence, Zulaikhā determined to have her revenge on the ladies. She invited them to a sumptuous banquet. At dessert, just as they were about to cut their oranges with their knives, Yūsuf was admitted to the assembly. The very sight of him dazzled the ladies. 'He is no man, but a noble angel!' they cried. In their extreme emotion they cut their fingers. Zulaikhā was more than justified in their eyes. But they had their own lower motives. Each lady thought in her heart that she could win his love where Zulaikhā had failed. Jealousy further inflamed Zulaikhā's passion. They advised her to soften the steel in the fire, to soften Yūsuf's heart in prison. Yūsuf was now beset with the persecution, not of one woman but of many women, and he himself prayed for safety in prison. Many motives on the part of various people thus combined to send him to prison. They are analysed in my note 1684 to xii. 35. So to prison Yūsuf went, with all marks of disgrace and ignominy.

To the men in prison Yūsuf's advent was a blessing, for he taught them the Truth and showed them the Light. Such men as Yūsuf, says the poet, turn a hell into Paradise. To Zulaikhā's heart came new sorrow, new penitence, new tortures of conscience. Her heart was in prison with the prisoner. Her health gave way. In torturing and killing her false Self, she began almost to regain her true Self.

Meanwhile Yūsuf's goodness of heart made him a king among his fellow-prisoners. If any were ill, he tended them; if there was anything on their mind, he sympathised with them and consoled them. They had unbounded faith in him, and they gladly took his teaching and profited by it. Two of them took their dreams to him and he interpreted them correctly. One of them was restored to the king's favour. When the king in his turn dreamed a dream, this man remembered Yūsuf and obtained the interpretation of the king's dream through him. Yūsuf was released from prison, raised to high honour, and given full authority in the land. The old Wazīr, Zulaikhā's husband, was dead, and Yūsuf was charged with the arrangements for meeting the great famine that was prognosticated. This part of the story is touched upon but lightly by the poet, as his theme is the love of Zulaikhā.

She, a widow, bereft of youth, beauty, honour, resources, health, even eyesight, yet cherishes the memory of Yūsuf and waters it with her tears. He is now far above her in worldly station, as he always was above her in spiritual worth. Her humbled pride opens her spiritual eyes. She cries to him in her agony, and he listens. He knows the true from the false, and he is just. The woman whom he repelled when she was in the bloom of health, youth, and beauty, when she was rich, proud, and high in rank—now that she is meek, lowly, and sincere, finds favour in his sight. At his prayer her health, youth, and beauty are restored, and they are married in pure and true love. Even so, their love was not perfected until they united their hearts in pure worship to God.

The core of the allegory is in its definition of love,—the true and the eternal as distinguished from the false and the ephemeral. Life is subject to many changes, and so is what is ordinarily called Love among men.

"One is cast down to the earth, and one
Is lifted on high like the glorious sun.
Blessed is he who has wit to learn
How the favour of fortune may change and turn,
Whose head is not raised in his high estate,
Nor his heart in misfortune made desolate."

False love is only a toy for self-indulgence. Self, not the Other, is the governing motive.

"When love is not perfect, with one sole thought—
Himself—is the heart of the lover fraught.
He looks on his love as a charming toy,
The spring and source of his selfish joy.
One rose he would pluck from his love, and leave
A hundred thorns her lone heart to grieve."

Just as, in human affairs, there is true and false love, so in our inner and higher life, there is a divine love that transcends all human love. This is the contrast between the *'ishq haqiqī* and the *'ishq majāsī*.

"How blest is he who can close his eye
And let the vain pageants of life pass by!—
Untouched by the magic of earth can keep
His soul awake while the senses sleep;
Scorn the false and the fleeting that meets the view,
And see what is hidden and firm and true!"

To the meek and lowly, who seek God's love in sincerity and are willing to sacrifice all that the external world holds dear, God grants His love in abundant measure. For every sin, followed by repentance and right will, there is forgiveness; but for persistent pride and hardness of heart there is nothing but the abyss. . . .

This allegory has sometimes been compared to that of Cupid and Psyche in western literature. It goes back to Greek and Roman times. Cupid (or Eros) is Love (masculine): Psyche (feminine) is the human soul. The Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy built up a doctrine of the human soul, caught in the snare of matter and sensuality, which must be raised up to its pristine purity by Love. The most picturesque form in which the allegory was worked up was by Apuleius (born about 125 A.D.). It forms an episode in his Latin work *The Metamorphoses* or *The Golden Ass*. Here Psyche is the human soul whom Cupid (Love) carries off to a secluded spot. She is charged to check her curiosity and enjoy her bliss. Venus (earthly love) is jealous and makes Psyche break Love's condition, whereupon Love leaves her, and she falls into servitude to Venus (carnal love). After many adventures she is restored again by Cupid (true love) and they are re-united. The allegory has attracted many modern writers, including Robert Bridges (who has translated it) and Walter Pater who has adapted it in his *Marius the Epicurean*. William Morris has also introduced it in his *Earthly Paradise*. Among French writers whom it has attracted may be mentioned La Fontaine the fabulist, and Molière the dramatist. But the theme of that allegory is not as wide as the theme of the allegory of Yūsuf and Zulaikha.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA XIII (*Ra'd*).

The chronological place of this Sūra and the general argument of Sūras x. to xv. has been described in the Introduction to S. x.

The special argument of this Sūra deals with that aspect of God's revelation of Himself to man and His dealings with him, which is concerned with certain contrasts which are here pointed out. There is the revelation to the Prophets, which comes in spoken words adapted to the language of the various men and groups of men to whom it comes; and there is the parallel revelation or Signs in the constant laws of external nature, on this earth and in the visible heavens. There is the contrast between recurring life and death already in the external world: why should men disbelieve in the life after death? They mock at the idea of punishment because it is deferred: but can they not see God's power and glory in thunder and the forces of nature? All Creation praises Him: it is the good that endures and the evil that is swept away like froth or scum. Not only in miracles but in the normal working of the world, are shown God's power and mercy. What is Punishment in this world, compared to that in the life to come? Even here there are Signs of the working of His law: plot or plan as men will, it is God's Will that must prevail. This is illustrated in Joseph's story in the preceding Sūra.

Summary

The Book of Revelation is true, and is confirmed by the Signs to be seen in visible nature. God Who created such mighty forces in outer nature can raise up man again after death. God's knowledge is all-compassing: so are His power and goodness (xiii. 1-18, and C. 114).

The righteous seek the pleasure of God and find Peace; the evil ones break His Law, cavil and dispute, and reject faith; the wrath of God will take them unawares, but in His own good time (xiii. 19-31, and C. 115).

So was it with apostles before: they were mocked, but the mockers were destroyed, while the righteous rejoiced and were established (xiii. 32-43, and C. 116).

C. 114.— God's Truth comes to man in revelation
(xiii. 1-18.) And in nature. How noble are His works!
How sublime his government of the world!
They all declare forth His glory!
Yet man must strangely resist Faith,
And ask to see the Signs of His power
Rather than the Signs of His Mercy!
Doth not His knowledge search through
The most hidden things? Are not
Lightning and Thunder the Signs of His Might
As well as of His Mercy? He alone
Is Worthy of praise, and His Truth
Will stand when all vanities pass
Always like scum on the torrent of Time.

Sura XIII.

Ra'd, or Thunder.

In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. **A. L.** These are
The Signs (or Verses)
Of the Book: that which
Hath been revealed unto thee
From thy Lord is the Truth;
But most men believe not.

۱- الْقُرْآنَ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ
وَالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ○

2. God is He Who raised
The heavens without any pillars ¹⁸⁰⁰
That ye can see; is firmly
Established on the Throne
(of Authority); ¹⁸⁰¹
He has subjected the sun
And the moon (to His Law) !
Each one runs (its course)
For a term appointed.
He doth regulate all affairs, ¹⁸⁰²
Explaining the Signs in detail,

۲- اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ
تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ
وَسِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ
كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى
يُذَكِّرُ الْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ

1798. For A.L.M., see ii. 1, n. 25. For A.L.R., see Introduction to S. x. For abbreviated Letters generally see Appendix I. Here there seems to be a combination of the groups A.L.M. and A.L.R. We consider here not only the beginning (A.), the middle (L.), and the End (M.), of man's spiritual history, but also the immediate future of the interior of our organisation, such as it appeared to our Ummat towards the close of the Meccan period. But in trying to understand mystic symbolism, we must not be dogmatic. The befitting attitude is to say: God knows best.

1799. Cf. x. 1, n. 1382.

1800. Should we construe the clause "that ye can see" to refer to "pillars" or to "the heavens"? Either is admissible, but I prefer the former. The heavens are supported on no pillars that we can see. What we see is the blue vault of heaven, but there are invisible forces or conditions created by God, which should impress us with His power and glory.

1801. Cf. x. 3, and n. 1386. We must not think that anything came into being by itself or carries out its functions by itself. God is the active Force through which everything has its life and being and through which everything is maintained and supported, even though fixed laws are established for its regulation and government. The "term appointed" limits the duration of their functioning: its ultimate return is to God, as its beginning proceeded from God.

1802. Cf. x. 31, n. 1425. Where the laws of nature are fixed, and everything runs according to its appointed course, the government and regulation behind it is still that of God. Where there is limited free-will as in man, yet the ultimate source of man's faculties is God. God cares for His creatures. He does not, as in the idea of polytheistic Greece, sit apart on Olympus, careless of His creatures.

That ye may believe with certainty
In the meeting with your Lord.¹⁸⁰³

لَعَلَّكُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ۝

3. And it is He Who spread out
The earth, and set thereon
Mountains standing firm,
And (flowing) rivers: and fruit
Of every kind He made
In pairs, two and two:¹⁸⁰⁴
He draweth the Night as a veil¹⁸⁰⁵
O'er the Day. Behold, verily
In these things there are Signs
For those who consider!

۝ وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا
رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا
وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ
الْأُنثَيْنِ يُغْشَى الْيَلَّ الْنَهَارُ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ۝

4. And in the earth are tracts
(Diverse though) neighbouring,
And gardens of vines
And fields sown with corn,
And palm trees—growing¹⁸⁰⁶
Out of single roots or otherwise:
Watered with the same water,
Yet some of them We make
More excellent than others to eat.¹⁸⁰⁷
Behold, verily in these things

۝ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قُطُوعٌ مُّتَجَارِفٌ وَجَنَّاتُ
أَعْنَابٍ وَزُرْعٌ وَنَخِيلٌ صُنُوفٌ
صُنُوفٍ
يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ
وَنُفُضٌ بَعْضُهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الْأَكْلِ ۝

1803. One manifestation of His caring for His creatures, even where a limited amount of free-will is granted for their development, is that He is careful to explain His Signs both in nature and in express and detailed revelation through His Messengers, lest man should have any doubts whether he has to return ultimately to his Lord and account for all his actions during the "term appointed," when he was given some initiative by way of trial and preparation. If man attends carefully to the Signs, he should have no doubt whatever.

1804. I think that this refers to sex in plants, and I see M. P. has translated accordingly. Plants like animals have their reproductive apparatus,—male stamens and female pistils. In most cases the same flower combines both stamens and pistils, but in some cases these organs are specialised in separate flowers, and in some cases, even in separate trees. The date-palm of Arabia and the Papaya of India, are instances of fruit trees which are uni-sexual.

1805. Cf. vii. 54 and n. 1032. The whole passage there may be compared with the whole passage here. Both their similarity and their variation show how closely reasoned each argument is, with expressions exactly appropriate to each occasion.

1806. Does "growing out of single roots or otherwise" qualify "palm trees" or "vines" and "corn" as well? The former construction is adopted by the classical Commentators: in which case the reference is to the fact either that two or more palm trees occasionally grow out of a single root, or that palm trees grow sometimes as odd trees and sometimes in great thick clusters. If the latter construction is adopted, the reference would be to the fact that date-palms (and palms generally) and some other plants arise out of a single tap-root, while the majority of trees arise out of a net-work of roots that spread out extensively. Here is adaptation to soil and water conditions,—another Sign or wonder of Creation.

1807. The date-palm, the crops of food-grains, and the grape-vine are all fed by the same kind of water: yet how different the harvests which they yield! And that applies to all vegetation. The fruit or eatable produce vary in shape, size, colour, flavour, etc. in endless variety.

There are Signs for those
Who understand !

5. If thou dost marvel
(At their want of faith),
Strange is their saying :
"When we are (actually) dust,¹⁸⁰⁸
Shall we indeed then be
In a creation renewed?" They are
Those who deny their Lord ! They
Are those round whose necks
Will be yokes (of servitude) :¹⁸⁰⁹
They will be Companions
Of the Fire, to dwell therein
(For aye) !

6. They ask thee to hasten on
The evil in preference to the
good :¹⁸¹⁰
Yet have come to pass,
Before them, (many) exemplary
Punishments ! But verily
Thy Lord is full of forgiveness
For mankind for their wrong-doing,
And verily thy Lord
Is (also) strict in punishment.

7. And the Unbelievers say :
"Why is not a Sign sent down
To him from his Lord?"¹⁸¹¹
But thou art truly

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ○

هـ- وَإِنْ تَعْجَبَ فَعَجَبٌ قَوْلُهُمْ

عِذَا كُنَّا تُرَابًا

عَمَّا لَفِى خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ

وَأُولَئِكَ الْأَعْلَىٰ فِي أَغْدَارِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ

أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ○

٦- وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ

وَقَدْ خَلَقْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمُ الْمُثَلَّ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ

لِّلنَّاسِ عَلَىٰ ظُلُمِهِمْ

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَشَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ○

هـ- وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ

آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ

1808. After seeing the Signs in nature and the Signs in revelation, it is indeed strange that people should deny their Creator. But if they admit the Signs of the Creator, Who works marvels before their very eyes every day, why should they doubt that when they are reduced to dust, they can be raised up again? If one creation is possible, what difficulty can there be in accepting a renewed creation? It becomes then a question of an obstinate and rebellious will, for which the punishment is described.

1809. *Aglal*: yokes (of servitude): Cf. vii. 157 and n. 1128. The punishment may be conceived of in two stages: immediately, yokes of servitude to superstition, falsehood, etc., as against the freedom in Faith; and finally, the Fire which burns the very soul.

1810. The Unbelievers by way of a taunt say: "If there is a punishment, let us see it come down now." The answer to it is threefold. (1) Why do you want to see the punishment rather than the mercy of God? Which is better? (2) Have you not heard in history of terrible punishments for evil? And have you not before your very eyes seen examples of wickedness brought to book? (3) God works not only in justice and punishment, but also in mercy and forgiveness, and mercy and forgiveness come first.

1811. After all the Signs that have just been mentioned it is mere fractiousness to say, "Bring down a Sign." *Muṣṭafā* brought Signs and credentials as other Prophets did, and, like them, refused to satisfy mere idle curiosity.

A warner, and to every people
A guide.¹⁸¹²

SECTION 2.

8. God doth know what
Every female (womb) doth bear,¹⁸¹³
By how much the wombs
Fall short (of their time
Or number) or do exceed. ○
Every single thing is before
His sight, in (due) proportion.
9. He knoweth the Unseen
And that which is open:
He is the Great,
The most High.¹⁸¹⁴
10. It is the same (to Him)
Whether any of you
Conceal his speech or
Declare it openly;
Whether he lie hid by night
Or walk forth freely by day.¹⁸¹⁵
11. For each (such person)¹⁸¹⁶
There are (angels) in succession,
Before and behind him:
They guard him by command

مُنْذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ ۝

أَلَمْ يَلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْمُلُ كُلُّ امْرَأَةٍ
وَمَا تَغْنِصُ الْأَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ
وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ ۝

هُوَ عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالَى ۝

سَوَاءٌ مِنْكُمْ
مَنْ أَسْرَأَ الْقَوْلَ وَمَنْ جَهَرَ بِهِ وَمَنْ
هُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍ بِاللَّيْلِ وَسَارِبٌ بِالنَّهَارِ ۝

أَلَمْ يَلَمْ أَنَّ الْمُعَقَّبِينَ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ
خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۝

1812. The last sentence of this verse has usually been interpreted to mean that the Apostle's function was merely to warn, and that guidance was sent by God to every nation through its apostles. I think the following interpretation is equally possible: 'it is itself a Sign that Muṣṭafā should warn and preach and produce the Qur-ān, and the guidance which he brings is universal guidance, as from God.'

1813. The female womb is just an example, a type, of extreme secrecy. Not even the female herself knows what is in the womb,—whether it is a male young or a female young, whether it is one or more, whether it is to be born short of the standard time or to exceed the standard time. But the most hidden and apparently unknowable things are clear to God's knowledge: there is no mere chance: all things are regulated by God in just measure and proportion. The general proposition comes in the last sentence: "every single thing is before His sight, in (due) proportion."

1814. A verse of matchless rhythm in Arabic.

1815. Our most hidden thoughts and motives are known to Him at all times.

1816. See last verse. Every person, whether he conceals or reveals his thoughts, whether he skulks in darkness or goes about by day,—all are under God's watch and ward. His grace encompasses every one, and again and again protects him; if he will only take the protection, from harm and evil. If in his folly he thinks he can secretly take some pleasure or profit, he is wrong for recording angels record all his thoughts and deeds.

Of God. Verily never
Will God change the condition
Of a people until they
Change it themselves
(With their own souls).¹⁸¹⁷
But when (once) God willeth
A people's punishment,
There can be no
Turning it back, nor
Will they find, besides Him,
Any to protect.

12. It is He Who doth show you
The lightning, by way
Both of fear and of hope: ¹⁸¹⁸
It is He Who doth raise up
The clouds, heavy
With (fertilising) rain!

13. Nay, thunder repeateth His
praises, ¹⁸¹⁹
And so do the angels, with awe: ¹⁸²⁰
He flingeth the loud-voiced
Thunder-bolts, and therewith
He striketh whomsoever He will...
Yet these (are the men)
Who (dare to) dispute
About God, with the strength
Of His power (supreme)! ¹⁸²¹

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ
حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ
وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا
فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ
وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَالٍ ۝

۱۲- هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ الْبَرْقَ
جُحُوقًا وَطَمَعًا
وَيُنْزِلُ السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ ۝

۱۳- وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِ
وَيُرْسِلُ الصَّوَاعِقَ
فَيُصِيبُ بِهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُمْ يُجَادِلُونَ
فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ شَدِيدُ الْحِسَابِ ۝

1817. God is not intent on punishment. He created man virtuous and pure; he gave him intelligence and knowledge; he surrounded him with all sorts of instruments of His grace and mercy. If, in spite of all this, man distorts his own will and goes against God's Will, yet is God's forgiveness open to him if he will take it. It is only when he has made his own sight blind and changed his own nature or soul away from the beautiful mould in which God formed it, that God's Wrath will descend on him and the favourable position in which God placed him will be changed. When once the punishment comes, there is no turning it back. None of the things which he relied upon—other than God—can possibly protect him.

1818. Here then is the climax to the answer of the sarcastic challenge of the Unbelievers for punishment, in language of great sublimity. Why look to evil rather than to good?—to punishment rather than to mercy?—to the fear in the force and fire of the lightning rather than to the hope of good and abundant crops in the rain which will come behind the lightning clouds?

1819. Nay, thunder itself, which may frighten you, is but a tame and beneficent force before Him, declaring His praises, like the rest of creation. THUNDER thus aptly gives the name to this Sūra of contrasts, where what we may think terrible is shown to be really a submissive instrument of good in God's hands.

1820. And the angels, whom we think to be beautiful creatures of power and glory nearest to God, yet feel reverence and awe even as they praise His holy name.

1821. Who is puny man, to call God in question? Cf. some variations on this theme in the Book of Job, itself an Arabian book, e.g., chapters 38 to 41.

14. **For Him (alone) is prayer**
 In Truth: ¹⁸²² any others that they
 Call upon besides Him hear them
 No more than if they were
 To stretch forth their hands
 For water to reach their mouths
 But it reaches them not:
 For the prayer of those
 Without Faith is nothing
 But (futile) wandering
 (in the mind). ¹⁸²³

١٤- لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ
 مِنْ دُونِهِ
 لَا يَسْمَعُونَ لَهُمْ شَيْءٌ
 إِلَّا كَبَاسِطٌ كَفَيْهِ إِلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُغَهُ فَاهُ
 وَمَا هُوَ بِالْبَاسِطِ
 وَمَا دَعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ۝

15. Whatever beings ¹⁸²⁴ there are
 In the heavens and the earth
 Do prostrate themselves to God ¹⁸²⁵
 (Acknowledging subjection),—with
 good will
 Or in spite of themselves: ¹⁸²⁶
 So do their shadows ¹⁸²⁷
 In the mornings and evenings.

١٥- وَبَلِّغُوا وَسْطَ الْجِبَالِ
 مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا
 وَظِلُّهُمُ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ ۝

1822. *Haqq*—truth; right; what is due, befitting, proper. All these meanings are to be understood here. If we worship anything other than God (whether it is idols, stars, powers of nature, spirits, or deified men, or Self, or Power, or Wealth, Science or Art, Talent or Intellect), our worship is both foolish and futile.

1823. Without Faith, it is obvious that prayer or worship has no meaning whatever. It is but an aberration of the mind. But there is a deeper meaning. You may have false faith, as in superstitions or in worshipping things other than God, as explained in the last note. In that case, too, you are pursuing mere phantoms of the mind. When you come to examine it, it is mere imbecility or futility. Worship and prayer are justified only to the One True God.

1824. There is much mystic meaning here, and indeed in the whole of this highly poetical *Sūra*. Notice that the original of what I have translated "whatever being" is the personal pronoun *man*, not *ma*. This then refers to beings with a personality, e.g., angels, spirits, human beings, and possibly other things of objective (not necessarily material) existence, as contrasted with their Shadows or Simulacra or Appearances, or Phantasms, mentioned at the end of the verse. Both these Beings and their Shadows are subject to the Will of God. See notes 1825 and 1827.

1825. "Prostrate themselves": the posture means that they recognise their subjection to God's Will and Law, whether they wish it or not.

1826. "In spite of themselves": Satan and the Spirits of Evil. They would like to get away from the control of the All-good God, but they cannot, and they have to acknowledge His supremacy and lordship over them.

1827. Even the Shadows—creations of the Imagination, or projections from other things and dependent on the other things for their existence, as shadows are to substance—even such shadows are subject to God's Laws and Will, and cannot arise or have any effect on our minds except by His permission. The Shadows are longest and therefore most prominent when the sun is level, and tend to disappear as the sun approaches the zenith. But even when they are longest and most prominent, they are still subject to God's Will and Law. The sun itself in this connection has a mystic meaning, referring to Intelligence, true Insight, the divine Light.

16. Say: "Who is the Lord and Sustainer ¹⁸²⁸

Of the heavens and the earth?"

Say: "(It is) God."

Say: "Do ye then take
(For worship) protectors other
Than Him, such as have
No power either for good
Or for harm to themselves?" ¹⁸²⁹

Say: "Are the blind equal
With those who see?"

Or the depths of darkness

Equal with Light?"

Or do they assign to God ¹⁸³⁰

Partners who have created
(Anything) as He has created,
So that the creation seemed
To them similar?

Say: "God is the Creator

Of all things: He is

The One, the Supreme and

Irresistible."

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

قُلِ اللَّهُ

قُلْ أَفَاتُخَذُكُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَاءَ

لَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ

نَقْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ

أَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمَاتُ وَالنُّورُ

أَمْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ شُرَكَاءَ خَلْقِهِ

تَشَابَهَ الْخَلْقِ عَلَيْهِمْ

قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

17. He sends down water ¹⁸³¹

From the skies, and the channels

Flow, each according to its measure:

But the torrent bears away

The foam that mounts up

To the surface. Even so,

١٤- أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً

فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا

فَاخْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا أَرَابِيًّا

1828. The meaning of "Rabb" is explained in n. 20, to ii. 2.

1829. Cf. v. 79.

1830. This verse may be analysed into six parts, each two parts going together like question and answer. Each except the fifth part is introduced by the word "Say", which is equivalent in old Arabic to inverted commas. The fifth part, "or do they assign.....similar?" is not introduced by "Say", because it is in the indirect form.

(1) Who is the Lord and Sustainer of the Worlds? It is God. (2) And yet you worship other gods? No, no one can be equal to Him, any more than darkness is equal to light. (3) Your other gods have created nothing by which you can be misled? No indeed; He is the only Creator, the One and Supreme.

1831. This verse is full of parables. (1) It is God Who sends rain and He sends it to all. See how it flows in different channels according to their capacities. Some are sluggish; some have a swift current. Some form great rivers and irrigate wide tracts of country; some are clear crystal streams, perhaps in hilly tracts, with beds of clean pebbles which you can see through the water. Some produce delicious edible fish; and some are infested by crocodiles or injurious monsters. And there are degrees and degrees among brooks, streams, lakes, rivers, and seas. So with the rain of God's mercy and the knowledge and wisdom and guidance which He sends. All can receive it. Different ones will respond according to their capacities. (2) In the physical world, water is pure and beneficial. But froth and scum will gather according to local conditions. As the floods will carry off the scum and purify the water, so will the flood of God's spiritual mercy carry away our spiritual scum and purify the water. (3) The froth may make a great show on the surface, but it will not last. So will there be frothy knowledge, which will disappear, but God's Truth will endure.

From that (ore) which they heat ¹⁸³²
 In the fire, to make ornaments
 Or utensils therewith,
 There is a scum likewise.
 Thus doth God (by parables)
 Show forth Truth and Vanity.
 For the scum disappears
 Like froth cast out;
 While that which is for the good
 Of mankind remains
 On the earth. Thus doth God
 Set forth parables.

وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَاءَ
 حُلِيِّهِمْ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ رَبِّكَ يَبْطِلُهُ
 كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ
 فَأَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً
 وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ ٥

18. For those who respond
 To their Lord, are (all)
 Good things. But those
 Who respond not to Him,—
 Even if they had all
 That is in the heavens
 And on earth, and as much more,
 (In vain) would they offer it ¹⁸³³
 For ransom. For them
 Will the reckoning be terrible:
 Their abode will be Hell,
 What a bed of misery!

١٨- لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ الْخَيْرُ
 وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُ
 لَوْ أَنَّ لَهُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا
 وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهِ
 أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْحِسَابِ
 وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ٥

قَالَ
 عَلَيْهِ
 السَّلَامُ

٥

C. 115.—The seeing and the blind are not alike :
 (xiii. 19-31.) Nor are those blessed with Faith and those without.

The former seek God, and attain
 Peace and blessedness in their hearts,
 And a final Home of rest: the latter
 Are in a state of Curse, and their End
 Is terrible. If God in His wisdom
 Postpones retribution, it is for a time.
 His promise never fails: it will come
 To pass in His own good time.
 In all things it is for Him to command.

SECTION 3.

19. **As** then one who doth know
 That that which hath been

١٩- أَفَمَنْ يَعْلَمُ مَنَّا

1832. In continuation of the last note, the fourth parable is that of metal ores: (4) the ore is full of baser admixture, but the fire will separate the gold from the dross for ornaments, or (5) some metal of household utility, with which you make every-day utensils, which the fire will separate from admixtures which you do not want. So the fire of God's test, either by adversity or by affluence, will search out the true metal in us and reject the dross. It will show us what is valuable or what is useful, from all sorts of scum and vanity which we collect and miscall knowledge.

1833. Cf. iii. 91 and x. 54.

Revealed unto thee
From thy Lord is the Truth,
Like one who is blind ? ¹⁸³⁴
It is those who are
Endued with understanding
That receive admonition ;—

20. Those who fulfil the Covenant
Of God and fail not
In their plighted word ;

21. Those who join together
Those things which God
Hath commanded to be joined, ¹⁸³⁵
Hold their Lord in awe,
And fear the terrible reckoning ;

22. Those who patiently persevere,
Seeking the countenance of their Lord ;
Establish regular prayers ; spend,
Out of (the gifts) We have bestowed
For their sustenance, secretly
And openly ; and turn off Evil
With good : for such is
The final attainment
Of the (Eternal) Home, — ¹⁸³⁶

23. Gardens of perpetual bliss :
They shall enter there,
As well as the righteous
Among their fathers, their spouses,

أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ
كَمْ مِمَّنْ هُوَ أَغْنَىٰ
إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ۝

٢٠- الَّذِينَ يُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ
وَلَا يَنْقُضُونَ الْمِيثَاقَ ۝

٢١- وَالَّذِينَ يَجْمَعُونَ مَا آمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ
يُؤْتَلَ وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُونَ
سُوءَ الْحِسَابِ ۝

٢٢- وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ
وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً
وَقَبِلُوا بِالْحَسَنَةِ الَّتِي بَدَلُوا
أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ۝

٢٣- جَنَّاتٌ عَنْ دُونِهَا
وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ

1834. In this section the contrast between Faith and Righteousness on the one hand and Infidelity and Evil on the other is set out. The righteous man is known as one who (1) receives admonition ; (2) is true to his covenants ; (3) follows the universal Religion of Faith and Practice joined together ; (4) is patient and persevering in seeking God ; and in practical matters he is known to be (5) regular in prayer ; (6) generous in true charity, whether open or secret ; and (7) no revengeful, but anxious to turn off evil with good, thus breaking the chain of evil which tends to perpetuate itself.

1835. That is, join faith with practice, love of God with love of man, and respect for all Prophets alike, i.e. follow the universal Religion, and not odd bits of it.

1836. Their journey in this life was at best a sojourn. The final Bliss is their eternal Home which is further prefigured in the two following verses,

And their offspring : ¹⁸³⁷

And angels shall enter unto them
From every gate

(with the salutation) :

24. "Peace unto you for that ye
Persevered in patience ! Now
How excellent is the final Home !"

25. But those who break
The Covenant of God, after
Having plighted their word thereto,
And cut asunder those things ¹⁸³⁸
Which God has commanded
To be joined, and work mischief
In the land ;—on them
Is the Curse ; for them
Is the terrible Home ! ¹⁸³⁹

26. God doth enlarge, or grant
By (strict) measure, the
Sustenance ¹⁸⁴⁰
(Which He giveth) to whomso
He pleaseth. (The worldly) rejoice
In the life of this world :
But the life of this world
Is but little comfort
In the Hereafter. ¹⁸⁴¹

وَذُرِّيَّتِهِمُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ
يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ ۝

٢٣- سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ
عُقُوبَى الدَّارِ ۝

٢٥- وَالَّذِينَ يَتَفَضُّونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ
وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ
وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَالَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ ۝

٢٦- اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ
وَقَرَحُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ
إِلَّا مَتَاعٌ ۝

1837. The relationships of this life are temporal, but love in righteousness is eternal. In the eternal Gardens of Bliss the righteous will be re-united with all those near and dear ones whom they loved, provided only that they were righteous also ; for in eternity nothing else counts. Blood-relationships and marriage relationships create certain physical bonds in this life, which may lead to much good, and possibly also to evil. All that is physical or evil will go. But the good will come forth with a new meaning in the final Reckoning. Thus ancestors and descendants, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters (for *ẓurriyat* includes them), whose love was pure and sanctified, will find new bliss in the perfecting of their love and will see a new and mystic meaning in the old and ephemeral bonds. Can we wonder at Jacob's re-union with Joseph, or that of Moses with Aaron, or of Muhammad Muṣṭafā with the Lady Khadija ? In fact all the Righteous will be re-united in the Hereafter (xii. 101).

1838. This is the opposite of the things explained in xiii. 21 above, n. 1835.

1839. This is in contrast to the state of the blessed, described in xiii. 22-24 above. The Curse is the opposite of the Bliss, and the Terrible Home is the opposite of the Eternal Home, the Gardens of perpetual bliss.

1840. God, the Sustainer and Cherisher of all His creatures, gives sustenance to all,—the sustenance including all means for their physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual growth and development according to their needs and capacities. To some He grants it in abundance ; to others He gives it in strict measure. No one can question Him, for His Will is supreme, and it is the measure of all good.

1841. Cf. ix. 38. The meaning here may also be : This present life is just a furniture, a convenience, a stepping stone, a probation, for the life to come. In itself it is less important than the Hereafter.

SECTION 4.

27. The Unbelievers say: "Why
Is not a Sign sent down
To him from his Lord?" 1843
Say: "Truly God leaveth,
To stray, whom He will;
But He guideth to Himself
Those who turn to Him
In penitence,—

۲۷- وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَخْلُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۝

28. " Those who believe, and whose hearts
Find satisfaction in the remembrance
Of God: for without doubt
In the remembrance of God
Do hearts find satisfaction.^{11 48}

٢٨- الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ
بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ
أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ۝

29. "For those who believe
And work righteousness,
Is (every) blessedness,¹⁸⁴⁴
And a beautiful place
Of (final) return."

۲۹- الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
طُوبَى لَهُمْ وَحَسُنَ مَا يَمْرُؤْنَ ○

30. Thus have We sent thee
Amongst a People before whom
(Long since) have (other) Peoples
(Gone and) passed away; ¹⁵₁₆
In order that thou mightest
Rehearse unto them what We
Send down unto thee by inspiration;

۳۰۔ كَذَلِكَ أَرْسَلْنَا فِي أُمَمٍ
قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا أُمَمٌ
لَتَتَّخِذُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّكْرَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ

1842. The question is repeated from xiii. 7 above : for the line of reasoning there suggested in answer is now completed, and another line of reasoning is now taken up. God provides every guidance for those who turn to Him in penitence, but He will leave those to wander astray who deliberately close their eyes and their hearts to His grace and the comfort that comes from remembering Him and celebrating His praises.

1843. The Sign or Miracle is not something external: it is something internal, something in your mind, heart, and soul. It depends on your inner spiritual experience. If you turn to God, that light, that experience, will come. If you do not, God will not force you.

1844. "Blessedness": *Tūbā*: an internal state of satisfaction, an inward joy which is difficult to describe in words, but which reflects itself in the life of the good man, through good and ill fortune, through good report and evil. And then, there is always the final goal to which his eyes are turned, the beautiful Home of rest in the Hereafter, after this life's struggles are over. That goal is God Himself.

1845. Our Prophet came later in time than other Prophets, to complete their Message and universalise Religion. And certainly it is after his age that the process of the unification of the world began. That process is not complete yet, but is proceeding apace.

Yet do they reject (Him),
The Most Gracious!
Say: "He is my Lord!
There is no god but He!
On Him is my trust,
And to Him do I turn!" 1846

31. If there were a Qur-an
With which mountains were moved,
Or the earth were cloven asunder,
Or the dead were made to speak,
(This would be the one!)
But, truly, the Command is
With God in all things! 1847
Do not the Believers know,
That, had God (so) willed,
He could have guided
All mankind (to the Right)?

But the Unbelievers,—never
Will disaster cease to seize
Them for their (ill) deeds,
Or to settle close to their homes,
Until the promise of God
Come to pass, for, verily,
God will not fail
In His promise. 1848

وَهُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ بِالرَّحْمَنِ
قُلْ هُوَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ مَتَابُ ۝

۳۱- وَلَوْ أَنَّ قُرْآنًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ
أَوْ قُطِعَتْ بِهِ الْأَرْضُ
أَوْ نُكِّلَ بِهِ الْمَوْتُ
بَلْ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ جَمِيعًا
أَفَلَمْ يَأْتِ الْبَلَّغِينَ آمَنُوا
أَنْ تَوْشَّاءُ اللَّهُ لَهْدَى النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا
وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا تُصِيبُهُمْ
بِمَا صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةٌ أَوْ تَحُلُّ قَرْنًا مِّنَ
كَارِهِمْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ وَعْدُ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ۝

C. 116.—The mockery of God's apostles is an old game
(xiii. 32-43.) Of the world. But God's Truth will come

To its own in good time. The End
Of the righteous is their Home of Bliss,
And they rejoice in the revelations
They receive. The Messengers of God
Take their due share in the life
Of the world; they win through by God's grace
Against all the plots of the world.
Their witness is from God, through His revelation.

1846. Faith tells us that no amount of opposition from Unbelievers can ever stop God's Plan

1847. Everything is possible and in God's power. His Plan is beneficent and all-embracing. But it is not for His creatures to dictate to Him, or demand what He should do, or how He should do it. The Command is with God in all things. The Believers know His omnipotence, and they also know that He will order His world for the best.

1848. Let not the Unbelievers think that if they seem to prosper for a time, that is the end of the matter. They are warned about three things. (1) Their ill deeds must carry evil consequences for them all the time, though they may not perceive them for a certain time. (2) Their homes, their places of resort, the circles in which they move, will also be haunted by their ill deeds and their consequences. For evil makes a complex of its environment. The walls of Jericho, when they fall, must bring down all Jericho in its ruins. (3) The ultimate Disaster, the final Reckoning, must come, for God never fails in His promise. True values must eventually be restored: the good to the good, and the evil to the evil.

The Commentators draw illustrations from the life of the Apostle, his exile from Mecca, and his restoration. A similar miracle works in all history. But the Command is with God.

SECTION 5.

32. Mocked were (many)

apostles ¹⁸⁴⁹

Before thee: but I granted
Respite to the Unbelievers,
And finally I punished them:
Then how (terrible) was My

requit! ¹⁸⁵⁰

٣٢- وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزَؤُا بِرُسُلِ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
فَأَمَلَيْتَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
ثُمَّ أَخَذْتَهُمْ فَكَيفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ○

33. Is then He Who standeth
Over every soul (and knoweth)

All that it doth,
(Like any others)? And yet
They ascribe partners to God.

Say: "But name them! ¹⁸⁵¹

Is it that ye will

Inform Him of something

He knoweth not on earth,

Or is it (just) a show

Of words?" Nay! to those

Who believe not, their pretence ¹⁸⁵²

Seems pleasing, but they are

Kept back (thereby) from the Path.

And those whom God leaves

To stray, no one can guide.

٣٣- أَفَمَن هُوَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا
كَسَبَتْ ۖ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ
فَلَن سَأَلُوهُمْ

أَمْ تَتْلُوْنَهُ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي الْأَرْضِ
أَمْ يَبْطَأُهَا مِنَ الْقَوْلِ ۚ

بَلْ زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَكْرُهُمْ
وَصُدُّوا عَنِ السَّبِيلِ ۚ

وَمَن يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِن هَادٍ ○

34. For them is a Penalty

In the life of this world, ¹⁸⁵³

But harder, truly, is the Penalty

Of the Hereafter: and defender

Have they none against God.

٣٤- لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَشَقُّ ۚ
وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن وَّاقٍ ○

35. The parable of the Garden

Which the righteous are

promised!—

٣٥- مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ ۚ

1849. Cf. vii. 10.

1850. The punishment was in many cases deferred. But when it did come, how terrible and exemplary it was!

1851. Cf. xii. 40. 'You have but to name your false gods, and you will see that they are nothing but names. There is no reality behind them, whereas God is the One great Reality. He penetrates everything through and through, and knows all things. Do you dare to tell Him of something on earth that He does not know? Or is it just a trick or a show of words?'

1852. All pretences and fancies seem attractive to their inventors, but alas! they are a great obstruction to the Path of Religion and Truth. However, if by their contumacy, they have cut themselves off from God's grace, who can guide them or reclaim them from their errors?

1853. The consequences of sin may be felt in this life itself, but they are nothing compared to the final penalties in the life to come.

In Arabic. Wert thou to follow
 Their (vain) desires after the knowledge
 Which hath reached thee,
 Then wouldest thou find
 Neither protector nor defender¹⁸⁶⁰
 Against God.

عَرَبِيًّا وَلَئِنَّ التَّبَعَاتِ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ
بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ
مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ ذَلِيلٍ وَلَا رَاقٍ ۝

SECTION 6.

38. ~~We~~ We did send apostles
Before thee, and appointed
For them wives and children: ¹⁸⁶¹
And it was never, the part
Of an apostle to bring a Sign
Except as God permitted ¹⁸⁶²
(Or commanded). For each
Is a Book (revealed). ¹⁸⁶³ period

٣٨- وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَ
جَعَلْنَا لَهُمُ آدَ وَاجًا وَذُرِّيَّةً
وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ
إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ ○

39. God doth blot out
Or confirm what He pleaseth :
With Him is
The Mother of the Book.¹⁸⁶⁴

۳۹- يَتَحَوَّلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ ۝
وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ ۝

40. **W**hether We shall show thee
(Within thy life-time)
Part of what We promised them
Or take to ourselves thy soul

٣٠- وَإِنْ مَا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ
أَوْتَوْقِئِنَّكَ

1860. *Cf.* ii. 120. The variation is in the single word "Wāq" here in place of "Naṣīr" in ii. 120. In each case the apt word is chosen not only for the rhythm in its own passage but for the general meaning in the Argument.

1861. All the apostles of whom we have any detailed knowledge, except one, had wives and children. The exception is Jesus the son of Mary. But his life was incomplete; his ministry barely lasted three years; his mission was limited; and he was not called upon to deal with the many-sided problems that arise in a highly organised society or State. We pay equal respect to him, because he was God's Messenger; but that is not to say that his Message covers the same universal ground as that of Muḥammad. There is no reproach for a normal human being if he lives a normal human life; there is glory if he beautifies it and sets a nobler example of virtue than other men, as did Muḥammad.

1862. No apostle performed any Miracle or showed forth any "Signs," except as God willed. God's Will (*Mashiyat*) is an all-wise, universal Plan, which is not formed for the benefit of one tribe or *millat* or of one age or country (see also next verse). The greatest Miracle in history was and is the Qur-ān. We can apprehend its beauty and grandeur to-day as much as did the people of Muṣṭafā's day,—even more, as our collective knowledge of nature and of God's creation has increased.

1863. *Kitāb*: I have translated "a Book (revealed)"; but it can also mean "a Law decreed" or "a Decree established." Ultimately the meaning is the same; for each age, according to God's wisdom, His Message is renewed.

1864. *Umm-ul-Kitāb*: Mother of the Book: the original foundation of all revelation; the Essence of God's Will and Law. Cf. iii. 7. and p. 347.

(Before it is all accomplished),—
Thy duty is to make
(The Message) reach them :
It is Our part
To call them to account.

وَأَتَيْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاءَ
وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ ○

41. See they not that We
Gradually reduce the land
(In their control) from its
Outlying borders ¹⁸⁶⁵? (Where)
God
Commands, there is none
To put back His command :
And He is Swift
In calling to account.

۴۱- أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ
نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا
وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَصِمُ لَكُمْ لِأَمْرِهِ
وَهُوَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ○

42. Those before them did (also)
Devise plots; but in all things
The master-planning is God's, ¹⁸⁶⁶
He knoweth the doings
Of every soul: and soon
Will the Unbelievers know
Who gets home in the End.

۴۲- وَقَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
فَبِذَلِكَ الْمَكْرُ جَمِيعًا
يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ
وَسَيَعْلَمُ الْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابِي الدَّارِ ○

43. The Unbelievers say : " No
apostle ¹⁸⁶⁷
Art thou." Say : " Enough
For a witness between me
And you is God, and such
As have knowledge of the
Book." ¹⁸⁶⁸

۴۳- وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا
قُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ
وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ ○

1865. In the Apostle's ministry at Mecca, the most stiff-necked opposition came from the seat and centre of power in Mecca. The humbler people—the fringe of Meccan society—came in readily, as also did some tribes round about Mecca. After the Hijrat there was a hard struggle between Mecca and Medina, and at last the bloodless conquest of Mecca in A.H. 8 made the Pagan structure finally collapse, though it had already been sapped to its foundations. So, generally, Truth finds easiest entrance through the humble and lowly, and not in the beginning at the headquarters of power, but in the fulness of time it makes its way everywhere with irresistible force.

1866. Cf. iii. 54, and n. 393.

1867. The enemies of Islam have to acknowledge that Muṣṭafā was a great and noble character, but they deny his apostleship. He could point to his credentials from God in the work which he achieved, and the Qur-ān which he brought.

1868. That is, those who have knowledge of revelation generally will recognise God's revelation in the holy Qur-ān. An alternative reading is "*min 'ind-i-hi*", which is written the same in Arabic, with only three vowel points different. If we adopt that, the last clause will be : "and from Him is (all) knowledge of the Book" : i. e., 'as all knowledge of the Book comes from God, the Qur-ān also bears witness to me'.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA XIV (*Ibrāhīm*).

For the chronology and the general argument of this Sūra in the series Sūras x. to xv., see introduction to S. x.

The special subject-matter of this Sūra is a continuation of the concluding portion of the last Sūra, which explained how God's revelation gains ground in spite of selfish men's opposition. Here illustrations are given from the story of Moses and Abraham, and Abraham's Prayer for Mecca forms the core of the Sūra.

Summary.

Revelation leads man from darkness to light. It comes to each nation in its own language and for its own special circumstances. So was it with Moses and other apostles. There was a conflict of evil with good, but evil was destroyed. Parable of the Goodly Tree (xiv. 1-27, and C. 117).

Why will not men receive God's grace? Why will they choose to go astray? Abraham prayed to be saved from infidelity, himself and his posterity, and he prayed for Mecca, the city of the new revelation through Arabia. Good and Evil will find their proper retribution, and God's Plan of Unity will prevail (xiv. 28-52, and C. 118).

C. 117.— Revelation leads mankind from the depths
(xiv. 1-27.) Of darkness into light. It comes

To every age and nation in its own
Language. So was it before; so will it be
Always. The apostles were doubted,
Insulted, threatened, and persecuted,
But their trust was sure in God.
It is Evil that will be wiped out.
God's Truth is as a goodly tree,
Firmly established on its roots,
Stretching its branches high and wide,
And bearing good fruit at all times.

Sūra XIV.

*Ibrahim, or Abraham.**In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

1. **A. I. R.** 1869 A Book
Which We have revealed
Unto thee, in order that
Thou mightest lead mankind
Out of the depths of darkness
Into light—by the leave 1870
Of their Lord—to the Way
Of (Him) the Exalted in Power,
Worthy of all Praise !—1871

2. Of God, to Whom do belong
All things in the heavens
And on earth !
But alas for the Unbelievers 1872
For a terrible Penalty
(Their Unfaith will bring them) !—

3. Those who love the life 1873
Of this world more than
The Hereafter, who hinder (men)
From the Path of God
And seek therein something
crooked :
They are astray
By a long distance.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

۱- اَلَمْ نَكْتُبْ اَنْزِلْنَاهُ
اِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ
مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ
يَاۤاٰدُنْ رَدِّمُوْهُمۡ اِلٰى صِرَاطِ الْعَزِیْزِ الْحَمِیْدِ ۝

۲- اللّٰهُ الَّذِیْ
لَهُ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِی الْاَرْضِ
وَوِیْلٌ لِّلْكَافِرِیْنَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ شَدِیْدٍ ۝

۳- الَّذِیْنَ یَسْتَحِبُّوْنَ الْحَیٰوةَ الدُّنْیَا عَلٰی
الْاٰخِرَةِ وَیَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِیْلِ اللّٰهِ
وَبِغْوَیْهَا عِوَجًا
اُولٰٓئِكَ فِی ضَلٰلٍ بَعِیْدٍ ۝

1869. For these Mystic Letters see Introduction to S. x.

1870. It is insisted on that every apostle speaks not from himself but from God. His leading into the light is but by the grace and mercy of God, not by any power of his own, or by any merit of those who hear him.

1871. In this and the next verse where the sentence is completed, three qualities of God are mentioned, viz., (1) His exalted position above all Creation; (2) His goodness, which entitles Him, and Him alone, to Praise; and (3) His Power in all heavens and earth. Thus He stands in no need of man's worship; His goodness is all for the good of man (and His creatures); and His control over His creatures is complete; so He can carry out His Will and Plan.

1872. See the last note. That being the case, in what a sad plight are those who reject the Faith and Grace offered to them, and draw down on themselves all the terrible consequences of that rejection,—the Wrath to come!

1873. The Unbelievers are here characterised in three ways: (1) they love this ephemeral life and its vanities more than the true Life which goes into the Hereafter; (2) they not only harm themselves but mislead others; (3) their own crooked minds search for something crooked in God's straight Path (*Cf.* vii. 45). But in doing so, they go farther and farther from the Truth.

4. ~~We~~ e sent not an apostle
Except (to teach) in the language¹⁸⁷⁴

Of his (own) people, in order
To make (things) clear to them.
Now God leaves straying
Those whom He pleases
And guides whom He pleases:¹⁸⁷⁵
And He is Exalted in Power,
Full of Wisdom.

٤- وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رُسُولٍ
إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِيُتَيَّنَ لَهُمْ
فَيُفْضِلَ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ٥

5. We sent Moses with Our Signs
(And the command), "Bring out
Thy people from the depths
Of darkness into light,
And teach them to remember
The Days of God."¹⁸⁷⁶ Verily
In this there are Signs
For such as are firmly patient
And constant,—grateful and
appreciative.¹⁸⁷⁷

٥- وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا
أَنْ أَخْرِجْ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ
وَذَكِّرْهُمْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ٦

6. Remember! Moses said
To his people: "Call to mind
The favour of God to you
When He delivered you"¹⁸⁷⁸

٦- وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ
اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ أَنْجَاكُمْ

1874. If the object of a Message is to make things clear, it must be delivered in the language current among the people to whom the apostle is sent. Through them it can reach all mankind. There is even a wider meaning for "language." It is not merely a question of alphabets, letters, or words. Each age or people—or world in a psychological sense—casts its thoughts in a certain mould or form. God's Message—being universal—can be expressed in all moulds and forms, and is equally valid and necessary for all grades of humanity, and must therefore be explained to each according to his or her capacity or receptivity. In this respect the Qur-ān is marvellous. It is for the simplest as well as the most advanced.

1875. "Whom He pleases": the usual expression for *Maskīyat*, the universal Will and Plan, which is all-wise and on the highest plane of goodness and righteousness.

1876. "The Days of God": the days when God's mercy was specially shown to them. Every day and every hour and minute, God's grace flows to us abundantly, but there are special events in personal or national history which may be commemorated as Red-letter Days. Those to the Israelites were set out in great detail in ii.40-61 and in other places.

1877. *Ṣabbār* is the intensive form, and includes all the ideas implied in *Ṣabr* (ii. 45 and n. 61, and ii. 153, n. 157) in an intensive degree. *Shakūr* and *Shākīr* have in them the idea of appreciation, recognition, gratitude as shown in deeds of goodness and righteousness. Both terms are applied to God as well as to men. A slight distinction in shades of meaning may be noted. *Shakūr* implies that the appreciation is even for the smallest favours and response on the other side; it is a mental attitude independent of specific facts. *Shākīr* implies bigger and more specific things.

1878. Cf. ii. 49. The reference back to Israel and Moses serves a double purpose—as an appeal to the People of the Book, and as a reminder to the Quraish of the favour now conferred on them by the coming among them of a greater Prophet than Moses.

From the people of Pharaoh :
They set you hard tasks
And punishments, slaughtered
Your sons, and let your women-folk
Live : therein was
A tremendous trial from your
Lord."

مِنْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُوءُكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ
وَيَذْبَحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ
وَفِي ذَلِكَ
بَلَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ۝

SECTION 2.

7. **And** remember ! your Lord
Caused to be declared (publicly) :
" If ye are grateful, I will
Add more (favours) unto you ;
But if ye show ingratitude,¹⁸⁷⁹
Truly my punishment
Is terrible indeed."
8. And Moses said : " If ye
Show ingratitude,¹⁸⁸⁰ ye and all
On earth together,—yet
Is God Free of all wants,¹⁸⁸¹
Worthy of all praise.
9. **It** was not the story
Reached you, (oh people !), of those
Who (went) before you ?—
Of the People of Noah,
And 'Ad, and **Thamūd**?—
And of those who (came)
After them ? None knows them¹⁸⁸²
But God. To them came

وَلَا تَأْذَنَ رَبُّكُمْ
لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ
وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ
إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ ۝
وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّ تَكْفُرًا
أَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا
وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝
وَالَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ
قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ
وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

1879. The various shades of meaning in *Shakara* are explained in n. 1877 above. *Kafara* implies: (1) to reject Faith, as in ii. 6 and n. 30; (2) to be ungrateful for mercies and favours received, as here; (3) to resist God or Faith, as in iii. 13; (4) to deny (the Signs of God), as in iii. 21, or deny the mission of apostles, as in xiv. 9. *Kāfir* in the most general sense may be translated "Unbeliever".

1880. Ingratitude not only in feeling or words, but in disobedience, and wilful rejection and rebellion. If the whole of you band together against God, you do not detract from God's power one atom, because God does not depend upon you for anything, and His goodness and righteousness and praiseworthiness cannot be called in question by your contumacy.

1881. Cf. in Milton's sonnet On his Blindness: "God doth not need either man's work or His own gifts!"

1882. Even the names of all the Prophets are not known to men, much less the details of their story. If some "news" of them (for the word translated "story" may also be translated "news") reaches us, it is to give us spiritual instruction for our own lives.

Apostles with Clear (Signs);
But they put their hands¹⁸⁸³
Up to their mouths, and said:
"We do deny that ye
Have been sent (on a mission),
And we are really
In suspicious (disquieting) doubt¹⁸⁸⁴
As to that to which
Ye invite us."

10. Their apostles said: "Is there
A doubt about God,
The Creator of the heavens
And the earth? It is He¹⁸⁸⁵
Who invites you, in order
That He may forgive you
Your sins and give you
Respite for a term appointed!"
They said: "Ah! ye are
No more than human,
Like ourselves! Ye wish
To turn us away from
The (gods) our fathers
Used to worship: then
Bring us some clear authority."¹⁸⁸⁶

11. Their apostles said to them:
"True, we are human
Like yourselves, but God
Doth grant His grace

جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
فَرَدُّوا أَعْيُنَهُمْ فِي آلِهَاتِهِمْ
وَقَالُوا إِنَّا كَفَرْنَا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنَّا
لَكِن شَاكِّينَ بِمَا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبِينَ

١٠- قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ كَفَى اللَّهُ شَاكًّا
كَاطِرَ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
يَذْعَبُونَكَ لِيُنْفِرَ كَرِّكَ مِنْ دُونِكَ
وَيُؤَخِّرَكَ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى
قَالُوا إِنَّا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا
تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ
آبَاؤُنَا قَاتِلِينَ بَشَرًا مِثْلِينَ

١١- قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ إِنَّا نَحْنُ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ
مِثْلُكُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَيِّدُ عَلَى

1883. That is, either that the Unbelievers metaphorically put their hands up to the mouths of the Prophets to try to prevent them from proclaiming their Message, or that the Unbelievers put up their fingers to their own mouths, as much as to say "Don't listen to them," or bite their own fingers in token of incontinent rage. Whatever construction we adopt, the meaning is that they were intolerant of their apostles, even as the Quraish were intolerant of Muḥammad and did all they could to suppress God's Truth.

1884. Cf. xi. 62. The distinction between *Shakk* and *raib* may be noted. *Shakk* is intellectual doubt, a doubt as to fact: is it so, or is it not? *Raib* is something more than intellectual doubt; a suspicion that there is fraud or deception; something that upsets your moral belief, and causes a disquiet in your soul. In lii. 30, it is used as equivalent to "calamity" or "disaster", some punishment or evil. Both kinds of doubts and suspicions are hinted at against men of God.

1885. The apostles (generally) clear both kinds of doubt. "You cannot doubt the existence of God! Behold His works! We are not speaking for ourselves or deceiving you. We speak according to the Message of inspiration from God." Notice that the doubters had said to the Prophets, "Ye invite us." The Prophets say: "It is God who invites you, and He does it to save you by His grace, and give you plenty of time (but not indefinite time) for penitence and amendment."

1886. Infidelity is illogical and argues in a circle. If the apostle speaks of God, the Unbeliever says, "You are only a man!" "But I speak from God!" "Oh well! our ancestral ways of worship are good enough for us!" "What if they are wrong?" "What authority have you for saying so?" "The highest authority, that from God!" And so we come back full circle! Then the wicked rely on violence, but it recoils on them, and they perish.

To such of His servants
As He pleases. It is not
For us to bring you
An authority except as God
Permits. It is God on Whom
All men of faith
Put their trust.

12. "No reason have we why
We should not put our trust
On God. Indeed He
Has guided us to the Ways
We (follow). We shall certainly
Bear with patience all
The hurt you may cause us.
For those who put their trust
Should put their trust on God."

SECTION 3.

13. And the Unbelievers said
To their apostles: "Be sure
We shall drive you out
Of our land, or ye shall
Return to our religion."¹⁸⁸⁷
But their Lord inspired
(This Message) to them:
"Verily We shall cause
The wrong-doers to perish!

14. "And verily We shall
Cause you to abide
In the land, and succeed them.
This for such as fear¹⁸⁸⁸
The Time when they shall stand
Before My tribunal,—such
As fear the Punishment
denounced."

مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ
وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْتِيَكُمْ بِسُلْطَنٍ
إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ○

١٢- وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللَّهِ
وَقَدْ هَدَيْنَا سُبُلَنَا
وَلَنَصْبِرَنَّ عَلَى مَا آذَيْنَاكُمْ
وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ ۝

١٣- وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلرُّسُلِ هُمْ
لَنُخْرِجَنَّكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِنَا
أَوْ نَتَّبِعُكُمْ فِي آلِهَتِنَا
فَاذْهَبْ إِلَى آلِهَتِهِمْ زُيِّنُوا لَهُمْ
الظَّالِمِينَ ۝

١٤- وَلَنُثَبِّتَنَّكُمْ الْأَرْضَ
مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامِي
وَخَافَ وَعِيدِ ○

1887. The arguments in a circle were explained in the last note. But Infidelity looks upon argument merely as an amusement. Its chief weapon is physical force. As its only belief is in materialism, it thinks that threats of force will put down the righteous. It offers the choice between exile and violence against conformity to its own standards of evil, which it thinks to be good. But Faith is not to be cowed down by Force. Its source of strength is God, and it receives the assurance that violence will perish ultimately by violence, and that Faith and Good must stand and be established. In fact the good must inherit the earth and the evil ones be blotted out.

1888. "Fear" means here "have present before their minds something which should cause them fear, so that they should shape their conduct in order to avoid the ill consequences of wickedness."

15. But they sought victory and
 decision¹⁸⁸⁹
 (There and then), and frustration
 Was the lot of every
 Powerful obstinate transgressor.¹⁸⁹⁰

١٥- وَاسْتَفْتَحُوا وَخَابَ
 كُلُّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ۝

16. In front of such a one
 Is Hell, and he is given,
 For drink, boiling fetid water.

١٦- قَبْلَ مَنْ وَرَأَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَيُسْقَى مِنْ تَوَّارٍ
 صَدِيدٍ ۝

17. In gulps will he sip it,
 But never will he be near
 Swallowing it down his throat:
 Death will come to him
 From every quarter, yet
 Will he not die: and
 In front of him will be
 A chastisement unrelenting.¹⁸⁹¹

١٧- وَيَجْرُوعُهُ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُسِيقُهُ
 وَيَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ
 وَمَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ
 وَمِنْ وَرَأَاهُ عَذَابٌ غَلِيظٌ ۝

18. The parable of those who
 Reject their Lord is that
 Their works are as ashes,¹⁸⁹²
 On which the wind blows
 Furiously on a tempestuous day:
 No power have they over
 Aught that they have earned:
 That is the straying
 Far, far (from the goal).

١٨- مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ
 كَرَمَادٍ
 اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ
 لَا يَقْدِرُونَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا عَلَى شَيْءٍ
 ذَلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ ۝

1889. Cf. viii. 19. I have assumed that "they" in this verse is the same as "them" in the preceding verse, i.e., the ungodly. Hoping for victory they forced a decision, and they got it —against themselves. Or they challenged a punishment, and it came in good time. Some Commentators construe "they" here to mean "The apostles": in that case the verse would mean: "The Apostles prayed for a victory and decision, and the ungodly were frustrated in their efforts to suppress the Truth."

1890. Cf. xi. 59.

1891. A graphic and deterrent picture, from the preaching of the earlier Prophets, of unrelieved horror of the torments of Hell. The door of escape by annihilation is also closed to them.

1892. Note the fulness of the parable. The works of the ungodly are in themselves light and unsubstantial like ashes: they are the useless rubbish that remains out of the faculties and opportunities which they have misused by burning them up. Further, the ashes are blown about hither and thither by the wind: the ungodly have no compass, direction, or purpose that can stand. The wind, too, which blows on them is no ordinary wind, nor the day on which they seek to enjoy the fruits of their labours an ordinary tranquil day: a furious gale is blowing, for such is the Wrath of God. They have neither internal peace nor external gain. In the scattering of the ashes they lose control even of such things as they might have earned but for their misdeeds. Their whole nature is contaminated. All their wishes go astray. They are carried so far, far away from what was in their minds. What did they aim at, and what did they achieve?

19. Seest thou not that God
Created the heavens and the earth
In Truth? ¹⁸⁹³ If He so will,
He can remove you
And put (in your place)
A new Creation?

۱۹- اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ
بِالْحَقِّ اِنْ يَشَآءْ يَذْهَبْكُمْ
وَيَاْت بِمَخْلُقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ۝

20. Nor is that for God
Any great matter. ¹⁸⁹⁴

۲۰- وَمَا ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ بِعَزِيْزٍ ۝

21. They will all be marshalled
Before God together: then
Will the weak say to those ¹⁸⁹⁵
Who were arrogant, "For us,
We but followed you; can ye
Then avail us at all
Against the Wrath of God?"
They will reply, "If we
Had received the guidance ¹⁸⁹⁶
Of God, we should have
Given it to you: to us
It makes no difference (now)
Whether we rage, or bear
(These torments) with patience:
For ourselves there is no way
Of escape."

۲۱- وَبُرِّزُوْا لِلّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا
فَقَالَ الضَّعِيْفُوْنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ
اسْتَكْبَرُوْا اِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا
فَقُلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّغْنُوْنَ عَنَّا مِنْ عَذَابِ
اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ؕ
قَالُوْا لَوْ هَدٰنَا اللّٰهُ لَهَدٰيْنَاكُمْ
سَرَّآءً عَلَيْنَا اَجْرٌ عَنَّا اَمْ صَبْرُنَا
مَا كُنَّا مِنْ مُّجِيْبٍ ۝

SECTION 4.

22. And Satan will say
When the matter is decided: ¹⁸⁹⁷
"It was God Who gave you
A promise of Truth: I too
Promised, but I failed
In my promise to you.

۲۲- وَقَالَ الشَّيْطٰنُ لَنَا نٰصِيْهُ الْاَمْرِ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَ الْحَقُّ
وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَاَخْلَفْتُكُمْ ؕ

1893. *Haqq*: Truth, Right, Righteousness, True proportions, Reality. God's creation is not to be trifled with. It is built on righteousness, and those who do not obey its laws must give place to others who do. This warning is repeated again and again in history and in revelation. Cf. vi. 73.

1894. 'Aziz: great, mighty, excellent, powerful, rare, precious.

1895. When the time for judgment comes, there are two kinds of disillusionment waiting for the ungodly. (1) Those who were misled and failed to see that each soul bears its own personal responsibility (ii. 134) and cannot shift it on to others, will turn to those who misled them, in the hope that they might intercede for them or do something to help them. They receive a plain answer as in the latter part of this verse. (2) Those who relied on Satan, the Power of Evil. His answer (in xiv. 22 below) is frank, cynical and brutal.

1896. Those whose power or specious intelligence or influence misled them—such as false priests or leaders—will find themselves in a parlous state. How can they help others? They themselves failed to profit from God's guidance, and they can with some justice retort that they put them in the wrong path as they followed it themselves!

1897. After the Judgment, Evil declares itself in its true colours. Frankly it says: 'I deceived you. The promise of God was true, but you believed me rather than God. I had no power to force you. I had but to call you, and you came running after me. You must blame yourselves. Did you think I was equal with God? I know too well that I was not and never could be. If you did wrong, you must suffer the Penalty.'

I had no authority over you
Except to call you, but ye
Listened to me: then
Reproach not me, but reproach
Your own souls. I cannot listen
To your cries, nor can ye
Listen to mine. I reject¹⁸⁹⁸
Your former act in associating
Me with God.
For wrong-doers there must be
A grievous Penalty."

23. **B**ut those who believe
And work righteousness
Will be admitted to Gardens
Beneath which rivers flow,—
To dwell therein for aye
With the leave of their Lord.
Their greeting therein
Will be: "Peace!"¹⁸⁹⁹

24. **S**eeest thou not how
God sets forth a parable?—
A goodly Word¹⁹⁰⁰
Like a goodly tree,
Whose root is firmly fixed,
And its branches (reach)
To the heavens,—

25. It brings forth its fruit¹⁹⁰¹
At all times, by the leave

وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ
إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي
فَلَا تَلُومُونِي وَلُومُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ
مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِي
إِنِّي كَفَرْتُ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِنْ قَبْلُ
إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

٢٣ وَأَدْخِلَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ
يُحَيِّيهِمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ

٢٤ أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا
كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ
أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفُرُوعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

٢٥ تُوْنِي أَكْلُهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ

1898. See the last note. An alternative interpretation of this sentence may be: "I had already beforehand rebelled against God with Whom ye associated me."

1899. How this contrasts with the misery and the mutual self-reccriminations of the ungodly!

1900. "Goodly word" is usually interpreted as the Divine Word, the Divine Message, the True Religion. It may also be interpreted in a more general sense as a word of truth, a word of goodness or kindness, which follows from a true appreciation of Religion. For Religion includes our duty to God and our duty to man. The "evil word" is opposite to this: false religion, blasphemy, false speech, or preaching or teaching unkindness and wrong-doing. The Word, in mystic language, is the root of the Deed, and is identified with the Deed.

1901. The goodly tree is known for: (1) its beauty; it gives pleasure to all who see it; (2) its stability; it remains firm and unshaken in storms, because its roots are firmly fixed in the earth; (3) its wide compass; its branches reach high, and it catches all the sunshine from heaven, and gives shade to countless birds in its branches and men and animals beneath it, and (4) its abundant fruit, which it yields at all times. So is the Good Word. It is as beautiful as it is true. It abides in all the changes and chances of this life, and even beyond (see verse 27 below); it is never shaken by sorrow or what seems to us calamity; its roots are deep down in the bed-rock facts of life. Its reach is universal, above, around, below: it is illuminated by the divine light from heaven, and its consolation reaches countless beings of all grades of life. Its fruit—the enjoyment of its blessings—is not confined to one season or one set of circumstances; furthermore the fortunate man who is the vehicle of that word has no self-pride; he attributes all its goodness, and his act in spreading it, to the Will and Leave of God. Cf. the New Testament Parable of the Sower (Matt. iv. 14-20) or of the Mustard seed (Matt. iv. 30-32). In this Parable of the Qur-ān there are fewer words and more spiritual meaning, and the emphasis is on more essential things.

Of its Lord.
So God sets forth parables
For men, in order that
They may receive admonition.

رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ
لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ○

26. And the parable
Of an evil Word
Is that of an evil tree:
It is torn up by the root
From the surface of the earth:
It has no stability.¹⁹⁰²

٢٦- وَمَثَلُ كُلِّ نَجَسٍ ظَنٍّ خَبِيثَةٍ كَتَبَتْهُ خَبِيثَةً
اجْتَنَّتْ مِنَ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ هَالِكًا مِنْ
قَرَارٍ ○

27. God will establish in strength
Those who believe, with the Word
That stands firm, in this world
And in the Hereafter; but God
Will leave, to stray, those
Who do wrong: God doeth
What He willeth.¹⁹⁰³

٢٧- يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ
الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ
وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ○

C. 118.—But the evil not only choose evil
(xiv. 28-52.) For themselves but mislead others
To perdition. The godly should learn
From the Signs of God all around them,
And be on their guard against all
That is false. So Abraham prayed
Not only for his posterity, but for all:
For he foresaw the universality
Of God's Message in Islam.
That leads to the mystic doctrine
Of Oneness, which will be seen
In its fulness on the Great Day
When a new Earth and a new Heaven
Will proclaim the end of Evil
And the adjustment of all this life's accounts.

1902. The evil tree is the opposite of the goodly tree. The parallelism of contrast can be followed out in all the details of the last note.

1903. His Will and Plan may be above comprehension, but will prevail over all things. It is not like the will of man, who may plan good things but is not necessarily able to carry them out.

SECTION 5.

28. ~~Has~~ ¹⁹⁰⁴ Hast thou not turned
Thy vision to those who
Have changed the favour of God
Into blasphemy and caused
Their people to descend
To the House of Perdition?—

٢٨- أَلَمْ تَر إِلَى الَّذِينَ
بَدَّلُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ كُفْرًا
وَأَحْلَوْا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ

29. Into Hell? They will burn
Therein,—an evil place
To stay in!

٢٩- جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَوْنَهَا
وَيَبْسُ الْقَرَارُ

30. And they set up (idols)
As equal to God, to mislead
(Men) from the Path! Say:
"Enjoy (your brief power)!
But verily ye are making
Straightway for Hell!"

٣٠- وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا لِيُضِلُّوا
عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ قُلْ تَسْتَعْتِفُوا
لَئِنْ مَضَىٰ كُفْرُ إِلَى الثَّارِ

31. ~~Speak~~ ¹⁹⁰⁵ Speak to my servants
Who have believed,¹⁹⁰⁶
That they may establish
Regular prayers, and spend
(In charity) out of the
Sustenance¹⁹⁰⁶

٣١- قُلْ لِعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا

1904. There is a particular and a general meaning. The particular meaning is understood to be a reference to the Meccan Pagans who turned the House of God into a place for the worship of horrible idols and the practice of unseemly rites and cults. There is no real difficulty in accepting this as part of a late Meccan Sūra even without supposing it to be a prophecy. The Meccan Pagans had turned Religion into a blasphemous superstition, and were misguiding their people, persecuting the true Messenger of God and all who followed his teaching. Their cup of iniquity seemed about full, and they seemed to be heading to perdition, as later events indeed showed to be the case.

The general meaning is also clear. Selfish men, when they seize power, want worship for themselves or their Phantasies, in derogation of the true God. Power, which should have been an instrument of good, becomes in their hands an instrument of evil. They and their people rush headlong to perdition. "These be thy gods, oh Israel!" has been a cry repeated again and again in history, in the face, or at the back, of men of God!

1905. Putting ourselves back in the position in which the Muslim community found themselves in Mecca just before the Hijrat, we can imagine how much encouragement and consolation they needed from the preaching, the Faith, and the steadfast character of Muḥammad. Intolerant persecution was the order of the day; neither the life nor the property or reputation of the Muslims was safe. They are asked to find strength and tranquillity in prayer and in helping each other according to their needs and resources.

1906. Here, as elsewhere, "Sustenance" is to be taken in the literal as well as the metaphorical sense. There were many among the Muslims who were poor, or slaves, or depressed, because they were deprived of the means of livelihood on account of their Faith. They were to be fed, clothed, and sheltered, by those who had means. There were those who were ignorant and needed spiritual sustenance: they were to be taught and strengthened by those to whom God had given knowledge and firmness of character. Charity was to be ordinarily secret, so as to cut out all show or parade, and perhaps also lest the enemy should dry up those sources by unprincipled violence; but there must be much that had to be open and organised, so that all the needy could know where to go to be relieved.

We have given them,
Secretly and openly, before
The coming of a Day
In which there will be
Neither mutual bargaining¹⁹⁰⁷
Nor befriending.

رَضَرْنَا لَهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً
مَنْ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمُ
لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلُوفٍ ۝

32. It is God Who hath created
The heavens and the earth
And sendeth down rain
From the skies, and with it
Bringeth out fruits wherewith
To feed you; it is He
Who hath made the ships subject
To you, that they may sail
Through the sea by His Command;
And the rivers (also)
Hath He made subject to you.¹⁹⁰⁸

۝-۳۲ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ
وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الْفَلَكَ
لِيَجْزِيَ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ
وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الْأَنْهَارَ ۝

33. And He hath made subject
To you the sun and the moon,¹⁹⁰⁹
Both diligently pursuing
Their courses; and the Night
And the Day hath He (also)
Made subject to you.

۝-۳۳ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ
الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَائِبَيْنِ
وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۝

1907. The great Day of Reckoning would be one on which all values would be changed. Wealth, as understood in this world, would no longer count. Should we not therefore use any wealth we have in this life, to give here and receive there? *Bai'* includes all bargaining,—barter, purchase and sale, etc. In this world, where wealth has some value, let us spend it and get for ourselves "treasures in heaven". In the next life each man will stand on his merits and personal responsibility. One man cannot help another. Let us here help each other to become true and righteous, so that our personal account may be favourable there.

1908. We must realise that behind all our strength, skill, and intelligence there is the power and goodness of God, Who gave us all these things. Man can understand and control the forces of nature so as to bring them to his own service: he can only do so, because (1) he has got these gifts from God, and (2) God has fixed definite laws in nature, of which he can take advantage by God's command and permission. He has been made Vicegerent on earth (ii. 30): God commanded the highest creatures to bow down to Adam (ii. 34). Man, by God's command, can use rain to produce food for himself; make ships to sail the seas; use rivers as highways, and cut canals for traffic and irrigation. Not only this, but even the heavenly bodies can (by God's command) contribute to his needs (see next verse).

1909. The sun gives out heat, which is the source of all life and energy on this planet, and produces the seasons of the year, by utilising which man can supply his needs, not only material, but immaterial in the shape of light, health, and other blessings. The sun and the moon together produce tides, and are responsible for atmospheric changes which are of the highest importance in the life of man. The succession of Day and Night is due to the apparent daily course of the sun through the skies; and the cool light of the moon performs other services different from those of warm day-light. Because there are laws here, which man can understand and calculate, he can use all such things for his own service, and in that sense the heavenly bodies are themselves made subject to him by God's command.

- 34 And He giveth you
Of all that ye ask for.¹⁹¹⁰
But if ye count the favours
Of God, never will ye
Be able to number them.
Verily, man is given up
To injustice and ingratitude.¹⁹¹¹

SECTION 6.

35. Remember Abraham said:¹⁹¹²
"Oh my Lord! make this city
One of peace and security:
And preserve me and my sons
From worshipping idols."¹⁹¹³

36. "Oh my Lord! they have indeed
Led astray many among mankind;
He then who follows my (ways)
Is of me, and he that
Disobeys me,—but Thou
Art indeed Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

37. "Oh our Lord! I have made
Some of my offspring to dwell
In a valley without cultivation,¹⁹¹⁴
By Thy Sacred House;

۳۴- وَأَتْلُكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ
وَإِنْ تَعَدَّ وَابْعَثَتِ اللَّهُ لَا تُحْصُوهُمَا
إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَقَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ ۝

۳۵- وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا
الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي
وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ ۝

۳۶- رَبِّ إِنَّمَنْ أَضَلَّنِي
كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ ۖ فَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي
وَمَنْ عَصَانِي
فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

۳۷- رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَصْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي
بَوَادِي غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ

1910. Sincere and true prayer in faith is answered by God. Thus He gives us everything which a wise and benevolent Providence can give.

1911. I have tried to render the intensive forms of the Arabic by what I consider their near equivalents here: the phrase "given up to injustice and ingratitude" suggests habitual ignoring of just values and ingratitude for the innumerable gifts and favours which God has showered on mankind.

1912. This Prayer of Abraham, the True in Faith, the progenitor of the Semitic peoples and the Prototype of their Religion, is introduced in this place, to illustrate the points referred to in the preceding section, xiv. 31-34, viz., how the new Revelation through the Ka'ba bears out the universal Revelation of Prayer and Charity, Love of God and man, Recognition of God's handiwork in nature, and Insistence on man's turning away from false worship and ingratitude to God. Notice the four divisions into which it falls: (1) verses 35-36 are spoken by Abraham as on his own behalf ("oh my Lord!"); (2) verses 37-38 are spoken on behalf of his progeny ("oh our Lord!") but with special reference to the elder branch, the children of Ismā'il; (3) verses 39-40 are again a personal appeal, but both branches of his family, viz., the sons of Ismā'il and Isaac, are expressly mentioned; (4) verse 41 is a Prayer for himself, his parents, and all Believers, typifying that in the universality of Islam all nations are to be blessed. Jerusalem, for the Mosaic Law and the Gospel of Jesus, was the centre and symbol for the Jewish race, though of course all God's Truth is universal; Mecca, the centre of the Arab race, was to throw off its tribal character and become universal, in spite of the Meccans themselves.

1913. Cf. ii. 125-129. Abraham (with Ismā'il) built the Ka'ba, and Abraham asks a blessing on his handiwork and forgiveness for such lapses into idolatry as both branches of his family might fall into.

1914. The Meccan valley is enclosed by hills on all sides, unlike Medina, which has level cultivated plains. But just because of its natural isolation, it is fitted to be a centre for Prayer and Praise.

In order, oh our Lord, that they
May establish regular Prayer:
So fill the hearts of some
Among men with love towards
And feed them with Fruits: ¹⁹¹⁵ *them,*
So that they may give thanks.

38. "Oh our Lord! truly Thou
Dost know what we conceal
And what we reveal:
For nothing whatever is hidden
From God, whether on earth
Or in heaven."¹⁹¹⁶
39. "Praise be to God, Who hath
Granted unto me in old age
Ismā'il and Isaac: for truly
My Lord is He, the Hearer
Of Prayer!"¹⁹¹⁷
40. "Oh my Lord! make me
One who establishes regular Prayer,
And also (raise such)
Among my offspring,"¹⁹¹⁸
Oh our Lord!
And accept Thou my Prayer.
41. "Oh our Lord!"¹⁹¹⁹ cover (us)¹⁹²⁰
With Thy Forgiveness—me,

رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي
إِلَيْهِمْ
وَأَنْزِلْهُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ ○

٣٨- رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِي
وَمَا نُعْلِنُ وَمَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ○

٣٩- الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ
إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ
إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعٌ دَلِيلٌ ○

٤٠- رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ
وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي
رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ ○

٤١- رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي

1915. Cf ii. 126, and n. 128. (The "Fruits" are there explained.) The righteous, though they have to have sustenance, both in a literal and figurative sense, require also the love and sympathy of their fellow-men.

1916. In Abraham's prophetic mind was the secret and open enmity or contempt which the Children of Israel were to have for the Children of Ismā'il (Arabs). He prays to God that they may be united in Islam, as indeed they were, except a small remnant.

1917. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born (Gen. xxi. 5.; and as Ismā'il was 13 years old when Abraham was 99, (Gen. xvii. 24-25), Ismā'il was also a son of his father's old age, having been born when Abraham was 86 years old. The younger son's progeny developed the Faith of Israel and that of Christ; the elder son's progeny perfected the more universal Faith of Islam, the Faith of Abraham the True.

1918. Abraham prays for both branches of his family, having a wider vision than some of the later Children of Israel.

1919. Read again n. 1912 above. Having prayed for his progeny, Abraham now prays for God's grace on himself, his parents, and the whole Brotherhood of Faith, irrespective of family or race or time, to be perfected in the ideal of Islam.

1920. For the shades of meaning in the different words for Forgiveness, see n. 110 to ii. 109.

My parents,¹⁹²¹ and (all) Believers,
On the Day that the Reckoning
Will be established ! " ¹⁹²²

SECTION 7.

42. Think not that God
Doth not heed the deeds
Of those who do wrong.
He but giveth them respite
Against a Day when
The eyes will fixedly stare
In horror,—

43. They running forward
With necks outstretched,
Their heads uplifted, their gaze
Returning not towards them,
And their hearts a (gaping)
void ! ¹⁹²³

44. So warn mankind
Of the Day when the Wrath
Will reach them : then will
The wrong-doers say : " Our
Lord !
Respite us (if only)
For a short Term : we will
Answer Thy Call, and follow
The apostles ! "
" What ! were ye not wont
To swear aforetime that ye
Should suffer no decline ? " ¹⁹²⁴

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ
الْحِسَابَ ۝

۴۲- وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَافِلًا
عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ ۚ
إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ
تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ ۝

۴۳- مُهْطِعِينَ مُقْنِبِينَ رُؤُوسِهِمْ
لَا يَرْتَدُّ إِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ ۗ
وَأَقْبَدَ لَهُمْ هَوَاءً ۝

۴۴- وَأَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمُ الْعَذَابُ
فَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رَبَّنَا
اجْعَلْ لَنَا أَجَلًا قَرِيبًا
نُجِيبَ دَعْوَتَكَ وَنَتَّبِعِ الرُّسُلَ ۗ
أَوَلَمْ نَكُونُوا أَقْسَمْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ
هَذَا لَكُمْ مِنْ زَوَالٍ ۝

1921. My parents. Abraham's father was an idolater (xlili. 26; vi. 74). Not only that, but he persecuted the Faith of Unity and threatened Abraham with stoning and exile (xix. 46); and he and his people cast him into the Fire to be burned (xxi. 52, 68). Yet Abraham's heart was tender, and he prayed for forgiveness for his father because of a promise which he had made (ix. 114), though he renounced the land of his fathers (Chaldea).

1922. At the final Reckoning, all that may seem inequality or injustice in this world will be redressed. But the merits of the best of us will need God's Grace to establish us in that lasting Felicity which is promised to the righteous. And Abraham, as the father of Prophecy, prayed for all,—for the Universal Faith perfected in Islam.

1923. A picture of horror. The evil ones, when they realise the situation, will be dazed: their eyes will stare without expression, and never move back; their necks will be outstretched; their heads uplifted in terror of the Judgment from on High; and their hearts become empty of all hope or intelligence as the physical heart might become empty of blood when the circulation stops. In this state they will press forward to Judgment.

1924. *Zawāl*—decline from the Zenith, as that of the sun; decline from the highest point reached by a heavenly body in its course through the sky. The ungodly are apt to think that their power will remain in the ascendant, on account of some material advantages given them temporarily by God, but they are constantly receiving warnings in history and revelation and from the example of others before them. There is a warning to the contemporary Pagan Meccans here; but the warning is perfectly general, and for all time.

45. "And ye dwelt in the dwellings
Of men who wronged their own
Souls; ye were clearly shown
How We dealt with them;
And We put forth (many) Parables
In your behoof!"

٣٥- وَ سَكَنْتُمْ فِي مَسْكَنِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
أَنفُسَهُمْ وَ تَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ كَيْفَ فَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ
وَ حَرَّبْنَا لَكُمْ الْأَمْثَالَ ○

46. Mighty indeed were the plots
Which they made, but their plots
Were (well) within the sight
Of God, even though they were
Such as to shake the hills!

٣٦- وَقَدْ مَكَرُوا مَكْرَهُمْ وَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ
مَكْرُهُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ مَكْرُهُمْ
لِتُرْزِلَ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالُ ○

47. Never think that God would fail
His apostles in His promise:
For God is Exalted in Power,—
The Lord of Retribution.

٣٧- فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ فَخْلَفَ وَعْدِهِ
رُسُلُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ ○

48. One day the Earth will be
Changed to a different Earth,
And so will be the Heavens,¹⁹²⁵
And (men) will be marshalled
Forth, before God, the One,
The Irresistible;

٣٨- يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ
وَ السَّمَوَاتُ وَ بَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ
الْوَّاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ○

49. And thou wilt see
The Sinners that day
Bound together in fetters; —¹⁹²⁶

٣٩- وَ تَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
مُقَرَّبِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ ○

50. Their garments¹⁹²⁷ of liquid
pitch,¹⁹²⁸
And their faces covered with Fire;

٤٠- سَرَابِيلُهُمْ مِنْ قَطَرَانٍ
وَ تَنَشَّطُ وَجُوهُهُمْ النَّارُ ○

1925. "A new earth and a new heaven" refers to (1) the entirely changed conditions at the end of things as we know them, so that we can only have the new world described to us by symbols and metaphors as in the following verses; and (2) to the spiritual world of changing values even as time goes on, so that the judgment on man begins gradually to take effect even while in externals he is in the phenomenal world, for in his inner being he is experiencing the effects, good or evil, of his conduct on earth. In the latter case, also, his mystic experience can only be described in symbols.

1926. The *fetters* will be their evil actions, thoughts, and motives, which they cannot shake off, as they could have shaken them off by repentance and amendment while there was yet time and opportunity to do so.

1927. *Sirbāl*; plural, *Sarābīl*: a garment or coat of mail, breast-plate; something covering the most vital parts of the body, like the shirt or the Indian *kuriā*.

1928. *Qaṭirān*: black pitch, a resinous substance exuding from certain kinds of trees like the terebinth or the pines, or distilled from wood or coal. It catches fire readily. Issuing from the upper garments (*Sarābīl*) the flames soon cover the face, the most expressive part of man's essence or being. The metaphor of fetters (n. 1926) is now changed to that of pitch, which darkens and sets on fire the soul of man.

51. That God may requite
Each soul according
To its deserts; ¹⁹²⁹
And verily God is Swift
In calling to account. ¹⁹³⁰

اِهْلِيْجِزِي اللّٰهُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ فَاَ كَسَبَتْ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ۝

52. ~~There~~ Here is a Message for mankind:
Let them take warning therefrom,
And let them know that He
Is (no other than) One God: ¹⁹³¹
Let men of understanding
Take heed.

هٰذَا بَلٰغٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذَرُوْا بِهِ
وَلِيَعْلَمُوْا اَنَّ مَا هُوَ اللّٰهُ وَاَحَدٌ
وَلِيُنذَرُ كَرُّ اَوَّلِ الْاَلْبَابِ ۝



1929. *Its deserts: i.e.,* according to what it earned by its own acts, good or evil, in its life of probation.

1930. *Swift in calling to account:* We can understand this in two significations. (1) Let not the wicked think that because God, out of His infinite grace and mercy, grants respite, therefore the retribution will be slow in coming. When the time comes in accordance with God's Plan and Wisdom, the retribution will come so swiftly that the ungodly will be surprised and they will wish they could get more respite (xiv. 44). (2) On the great Day of Reckoning, let it not be supposed that, because there will be millions of souls to be judged, there will be any delay in judgment as in a human tribunal. It will be a new world and beyond the flight of Time. Or if a metaphor from time as we conceive it in this world can be taken, it will all be as it were in the twinkling of an eye.

1931. Here is another aspect of the Truth of Unity. God being One, all justice is of one standard, for Truth is one, and we see it as one as soon as the scales of phenomenal diversity fall from our eyes. The one true Reality then emerges. Blessed are those who treasured this Truth in their souls already in their life of probation.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA XV (*Hijr*).

This is the last of the six Sūras of the A. L. M. series (x. to xv.). Its place in chronology is the late Meccan period, probably somewhere near the middle of that period. See Introduction to S. x., where will be found also an indication of the general subject-matter of the whole series in the gradation of Quranic teaching.

The special subject-matter of this Sūra is the protection of God's Revelation and God's Truth. Evil arose from Pride and the warping of man's will, but God's Mercy is the antidote, as was proved in the case of Abraham and Lot, and might have been proved by the people of the Aika and the Hijr if they had only attended to God's "Signs". The Qur-ān, beginning with the Seven Oft-repeated Verses, is the precious vehicle for the praises of God.

Summary.

God will guard His Revelation, in spite of the cavils of the Unbelievers; God is the source of all things; He knows His own people, whom He will gather to Himself (xv. 1-25, and C. 119).

How Evil arose through the pride of Iblis, to whom a respite was granted for a period; but neither fear nor evil will affect those who receive God's Message. (xv. 26-50, and C. 120).

The Mercy of God to Abraham was conveyed by the same messenger that were sent to destroy the people of Lot for their unspeakable crimes; Evil brought its retribution also on the Companions of the Wood (*Aika*) and of the Rocky Tract (*Hijr*) (xv. 51-84, and C. 121).

The Qur-ān and its Sūras teach you to celebrate God's praises, learn humility in worship, and serve God all your life (xv. 85-99, and C. 122).

Sūra XV.

Al-Hijr, or The Rocky Tract.*In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

1. **A. L. M.** ¹⁹³² These are
The *Āyats* ¹⁹³⁸ of Revelation,—
13 Of a Qur-ān
30 That makes things clear. ¹⁹³⁴



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

۱- اَلرَّحْمٰنُ اِلَهٌ اَكْبَرُ

وَقُرْاٰنٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝

C. 119.—God's Truth makes all things clear, and He
(xv. 1-25.) Will guard it. But His Signs are not
For those who mock. Who fails to see
The majesty, beauty, order, and harmony
Blazoned in His Creation, and His goodness
To all His creatures, in the heavens
And on earth? With Him are the sources
Of all things, and He doth freely give
His gifts in due measure. He holds
The keys of Life and Death, and He will remain
When all else passes away.

1932. For these mystic letters, see Introduction to Sūra x.

1933. Cf. x. 1, and n. 1382.

1934. Note how appropriately the different phrases in which the Qur-ān is characterised, bring out its different aspects as a Revelation. Let us just consider the phrases used at the beginning of the six A. L. M. Sūras, of which this is the last in order of arrangement. In x. 1 we read, "Āyats (or verses or Signs) of the Book of Wisdom", the theme being the wonders of God's Creation, and its relation to His Revelation. In xi. 1 we read, "a Book, with verses basic or fundamental, further explained in detail": the theme is God's Justice and punishment, to preserve the fundamental scheme of His Laws. In xii. 1 we read, "The Symbols (or verses) of the Perspicuous Book": the wonderful unfolding of God's Plan is explained in Joseph's story. In xiii. 1 we read, "The Signs (or verses) of the Book": the contrasts in the modes of God's Revelation and its reception by man are pointed out, but not illustrated by detailed examples as in Joseph's perspicuous story. In xiv. 1 we read, "A Book.....revealed.....to lead.....out of.....darkness into light": the theme being Abraham's prayer for man to be rescued from the darkness of false worship into the light of Unity. Here, in xv. 1 we read, "Āyats (or verses) of Revelation,—of a Qur-ān that makes things clear (or perspicuous)": the theme being an explanation of evil, and how God's Truth is protected from it.

2. Again and again will those
Who disbelieve, wish that they
Had bowed (to God's Will)
In Islam.¹⁹³⁵

3. Leave them alone, to enjoy¹⁹³⁶
(The good things of this life)
And to please themselves:
Let (false) Hope amuse them: soon
Will knowledge (undeceive them).¹⁹³⁷

4. Never did We destroy
A population that had not
A term decreed and assigned
Beforehand.¹⁹³⁸

5. Neither can a people anticipate
Its Term, nor delay it.¹⁹³⁹

6. They say: "O thou to whom
The Message is being revealed!
Truly thou art mad
(or possessed)!"¹⁹⁴⁰

رُبَّمَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لَوْ كَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ ۝

ذُرُّهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوا
وَيُلْهِهِمُ الْأَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

وَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَوْمٍ إِلَّا
وَلَهَا كِتَابٌ مَعْلُومٌ ۝

هَاسَاتِبِينَ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا
وَمَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ ۝

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِي نُزِّلَ
عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ ۝

1935. The time must inevitably come when those who allow themselves to be deceived by falsehood or deliberately break God's Law will find themselves in a terrible plight. They will then wish, ardently and again and again, that they had sought God's Will and walked in the light of Truth. That time may be early or late,—in this life, or at death, or at the Day of Judgment, but it must come. Man's own highest interest requires that he should awake to the Reality before it is too late for repentance.

1936. Literally, "to eat". Cf. v. 69 and n. 776.

1937. The foolish and the wicked set great store by the pleasures of this world. In their pride they think they have all knowledge. In the fulness of knowledge they will see how wrong they were. Meanwhile those who have received the Light should not for a single moment wonder at the apparent prosperity of the ungodly in this world. They should leave them alone, confident in the goodness and justice of God.

1938. *Kitābun ma'ālūn* literally, "a writing known". There are many shades of meaning implied. (1) For every people, as for every individual, there is a definite Term assigned: their faculty of choice gives them the opportunity of moulding their will according to God's Will, and thus identifying themselves with God's Universal Law. During that Term they will be given plenty of rope: after that Term is past, there will be no opportunity for repentance. (2) Neither the righteous nor the ungodly can hasten or delay the doom: God's Will must prevail, and He is All-Wise. (3) The destruction of a people is not an arbitrary punishment from God: the people bring it on themselves by their own choice; for the fixed Law or Decree of God is always made known to them beforehand, and in many ways.

1939. Cf. vii. 34. Also see the last note.

1940. *Muṣṭafā* was accused by the ungodly of being mad or possessed, because he spoke of higher things than they knew, and acted from motives purer and nobler than they could understand. So, in a minor degree, is the lot of all the righteous in the presence of an ungodly world. Their motives, actions, words, hopes, and aspirations are unintelligible to their fellows, and they are accused of being mad or out of their senses. But they know that they are on the right path, and it is the ungodly who are really acting against their own best interests.

7. "Why bringest thou not
Angels-to us if it be
That thou hast the Truth?"¹⁹⁴¹
8. We send not the angels
Down except for just cause:¹⁹⁴²
If they came (to the ungodly),
Behold! no respite would they
have!¹⁹⁴³
9. ~~We~~ We have, without doubt,
Sent down the Message;
And We will assuredly
Guard it (from corruption).¹⁹⁴⁴
10. ~~We~~ We did send apostles before thee
Amongst the religious sects¹⁹⁴⁵
Of old:
11. But never came an apostle
To them but they mocked him.
12. Even so do we let it creep
Into the hearts of the sinners—¹⁹⁴⁶
13. That they should not believe
In the (Message); but the ways

لَوْ مَا تَأْتِينَا بِالْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ۝

مَا نُنْزِلُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ
وَمَا كَانُوْا اِذَا مُنْظَرِيْنَ ۝

وَلَا نَحْنُ نُّزَكِّىٰكَ اِلَّا كَرَمًا
وَلَا نَاٰلَهُ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ ۝

وَلَقَدْ اَوْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِيْ رُسُلٍ
الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۝

وَمَا يَنْتَهِمُ عَنْ رُّسُوْلِ اِلَّا كَاۡنُوْا بِهِ
يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ۝

كَذٰلِكَ نَسْلُكُ فِيْ قُلُوْبِ الْغٰثِرِيْنَ ۝

لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهِ وَقَدْ

1941. Cf. vi. 8-9, and notes 840, 841. On the part of the unbelievers, this is a mere taunt. They neither believe in God nor in angels nor in revelation nor in any but material things. It is ridiculous to suppose that they could be taken seriously.

1942. Angels are not sent down to satisfy the whim or curiosity of the unbelievers. They are sent to bring inspiration to God's messengers and to execute God's decrees.

1943. If the angels were to appear before the ungodly, it would mean that they came to execute just punishment, and then there would be no hope of respite possible for the ungodly.

1944. The purity of the text of the Qur-ān through thirteen centuries and a half is a foretaste of the eternal care with which God's Truth is guarded through all ages. All corruptions, inventions, and accretions pass away, but God's pure and holy Truth will never suffer eclipse even though the whole world mocked at it and were bent on destroying it.

1945. *Shi'ya'un*, plural of *Shi'atun*—a sect, a religious division. Mankind sees fragments of Truth at a time, and is apt to fall into fragments and divisions. All true apostles of God come to reconcile these fragments or divisions, for they preach the true Gospel of Unity. So came Muṣṭafā to bring back to Unity the many jarring sects among the Jews, Christians, and Pagans. His mission was held up to ridicule, but so was the mission of his predecessors. Mockery itself should not discourage the preachers of Truth.

1946. If evil and disbelief exist in the world, we must not be impatient or lose our own faith. We must recognise that if such things are permitted, they are part of the Universal Plan and Purpose of God, Who is All-Wise and All-Good, but Whose wisdom and goodness we cannot fully fathom. One consolation we have, and that is stated in the next verse and the next note.

Of the ancients have passed
away.¹⁹⁴⁷

خَلَّتْ سُنَّةُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ٥

14. Even if We opened out to them
A gate from heaven,¹⁹⁴⁸
And they were to continue
(All day) ascending therein,

١٣- وَلَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ
فَقَالُوا فِيهِ يَغْرِجُونَ ٥

15. They would only say:
"Our eyes have been intoxicated:
Nay, we have been bewitched
By sorcery."

١٤- لَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا سُكِّرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا
بَلْ نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ مَّسْحُورُونَ ٥

SECTION 2.

16. It is We Who have set out¹⁹⁴⁹
The Zodiacal Signs¹⁹⁵⁰ in the
heavens,
And made them fair-seeming
To (all) beholders;

١٥- وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا
وَزَيَّيْنَاهَا لِلنَّظِيرِينَ ٥

17. And (moreover) We have guarded
them¹⁹⁵¹

١٦- وَحَفِظْنَاهَا

1947. Sects, divisions, and systems invented by men tend to pass away, but God's pure Truth of Unity endures for ever. This we see in history when we study it on a large scale. Cf. the parable in xiv. 24-26. *Khalal*: I have translated it here in the same sense as in xiii. 30, x. 102, and other places. Some Commentators give it a slightly different shade of meaning.

1948. Cf. vi. 35. The spiritual kingdom is open to all to enter. But the entrance is not a mere matter of physical movement. It is a question of a total change of heart. Evil must cease to be evil, before it can see or enjoy Good. If we could suppose. Evil, like Bottom the weaver, to be "translated" or in some way carried up to heaven, it would only think that the Truth was an illusion, and the reality was mere witchery. The taint is in its very nature, which must first be purified and rendered fit for the reception of light, truth, and bliss.

1919. Evil having been described, not as an external thing, but as a taint of the soul, we have in this section a glorious account of the purity and beauty of God's Creation. Evil is a blot on it, not a normal feature of it. Indeed, the normal feature is the guard which God has put on it, to protect it from evil.

1950. In the countless millions of stars in the universe which we see, the first step in our astronomical knowledge is to find marvellous order; beauty, and harmony, on a scale of grandeur which we appreciate more and more as our knowledge increases. The first broad belt that we distinguish is the Zodiac, which marks the sun's path through the heavens year after year and the limit of the wanderings of the moon and the planets. We make twelve divisions of it and call them Signs of the Zodiac. Each marks the solar path through the heavens as we see it, month after month. We can thus mark off the seasons in our solar year, and express in definite laws the most important facts in meteorology, agriculture, seasonal winds, and tides. Then there are the mansions of the moon, the mapping out of the Constellations, and the other marvellous facts of the heavens, some of which affect our physical life on this earth. But the highest lessons we can draw from them are spiritual. The author of this wonderful Order and Beauty is One, and He alone is entitled to our worship.

1951. Taking the physical heavens, we can imagine the supreme melody or harmony—the Music of the Spheres—guarded from every disturbing force. If by any chance any rebellious force of evil seeks to obtain, by stealth, a sound of that harmony to which all who make themselves consonant are freely invited, it is pursued by a shooting star, for there can be no consonance between evil and good.

From every evil spirit

accursed: 1952

18. But any that gains a hearing¹⁹⁵³

By stealth; is pursued

By a flaming fire, bright

(to see).¹⁹⁵⁴

19. And the earth We have

spread out¹⁹⁵⁵

(Like a carpet); set thereon

Mountains firm and immovable;

And produced therein all kinds

Of things in due balance.¹⁹⁵⁶

20. And We have provided therein

Means of subsistence,—for you

And for those for whose

sustenance¹⁹⁵⁷

Ye are not responsible.

21. And there is not a thing

But its (sources and) treasures¹⁹⁵⁸

مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ

۱۸-لَا مَنِ اسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ

فَاتَّبَعَهُ شَهَابٌ مُبِينٌ

۱۹-وَالْأَرْضُ مَدَدْنَاهَا

وَالْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ

وَأَكْمَلْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُوزُونٍ

۲۰-وَجَعَلْنَا الْكُفْرَ فِيهَا مَعَاشٍ

وَمَنْ نَسْتَمِرُّ لَهُ بِدَرَمِ قَيْنٍ

۲۱-وَلَنْ يَمُنَ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ

1952. *Rajim*: driven away with stones, rejected, accursed. Cf. iii. 36.

1953. Spiritually speaking, order, beauty, and harmony, light, and truth are repugnant to evil. It deliberately rejects them when offered freely as God's gifts. But its crooked nature loves to gain access by fraud or stealth. Its malevolent curiosity impels it to gain by stealth a sample of that harmony of which it is itself a negation. And its punishment is a flashing light, in itself most uncongenial to the powers of darkness, which are a negation of light. Notice that in the allegory the objective of Evil was to steal a hearing of Music: its punishment is therefore different—a flaming light which it did not seek. For both celestial harmony and celestial light are repugnant to the spirit of evil.

1954. A shooting star appears to be meant. Cf. xxxvii. 10.

1955. Majesty, order, beauty, and harmony are shown in all God's Creation, but especially in the heavens. Coming nearer to man, God's care for man and His goodness are shown (besides His other qualities) in His creation of the earth. In highly poetical language, the earth is described as spread out like a carpet, on which the eternal hills act as weights to keep it steady.

1956. And every kind of thing is produced on the earth in due balance and measure. The mineral kingdom supports the vegetable, and they in their turn support the animal, and there is a link of mutual dependence between them. Excess is eliminated. The waste of one is made the food of another, and *vice versa*. And this in an infinite chain of gradation and inter-dependence.

1957. See last note. 'We provide sustenance of every kind, physical, mental, spiritual, etc. for you, (i.e., for mankind). But We do more. We provide for every one of Our creatures. And there are those of which mankind is not even cognisant. We provide for them also. There are those who may at first sight appear hostile to man, or whom man may consider hostile, such as wild and noxious animals. They are Our creatures, and We provide for them also, as they are Our creatures. But there is due order and balance in the economy of Our universal Plan.'

1958. *Khazā'in*: treasures; store-houses; places where valuable things are accumulated, from which supplies are distributed from time to time as need arises.

(Inexhaustible) are with Us;
But We only send down
Thereof in due and ascertainable
measures.¹⁹⁵⁹

22. And We send the fecundating¹⁹⁶⁰
winds,
Then cause the rain to descend
From the sky, therewith
providing
You with water (in abundance),
Though ye are not the
guardians¹⁹⁶¹
Of its stores.¹⁹⁶²

23. And verily, it is We
Who give Life, and Who give¹⁹⁶³
Death: it is We Who remain
Inheritors¹⁹⁶⁴
(After all else passes away).

وَمَا نُنْزِلُهُ
إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ○

٢٢- وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيحَ لَوَاجِجٍ
فَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
فَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ
وَمَا أَنْتُمْ لَهُ بِمُحْذَرِينَ ○

٢٣- وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ مُعْجِ
دُنِيكُمْ
وَنَحْنُ الْوَارِثُونَ ○

1959. All the wonderful gifts and forces and energies which we see in the world around us have their sources and fountain-heads with God, the Creator and Sustainer of the Worlds. And what we see or perceive or imagine is just a small portion of what exists. That portion is sent out to us and to our world according to our needs or its needs from time to time as the occasion arises. It is strictly limited according to rule and plan. Its source is unlimited and inexhaustible. In the same way the forces which we see operating around us, in nature or in the spiritual world, according to laws which we can grasp and ascertain, are mere derived forces, in the 2nd, 3rd, or nth degree. Their source and ultimate fountain-head is with God.

1960. *Lawāqih*, plural of *lāqih*, from *laqaḥa*, to impregnate or fecundate the female date-palm by putting the pollen of the male tree on to the ovaries of the female tree. The date-palm is uni-sexual. The wind performs this office for many flowers. Here, by a bold metaphor, its fecundating quality is transferred to the clouds, which by means of rain produce all kinds of fruit, grain, and vegetation. The clouds as vapour are manipulated by the winds, which set up atmospheric currents resulting in condensation and the descent of rain. Note the appropriateness of the little particle "then", showing the connection of winds with rain.

1961. Cf. the previous verse, and n. 1958. Man may store water in cisterns, tanks, lakes, and head-waters of canals. But he has no control over its original sources, which are the clouds, which, by the help of the winds, act as the grand distributors of water over wide spaces of the world's surface.

1962. This verse must be understood as furnishing an example or illustration of what is said in the last verse.

1963. Note how the argument has mounted up from xv. 16 onwards to xv. 23—from things most remote from man to things touching his inmost being, and each of them in its own way is a wonderful instance of God's glory and goodness, and the beauty, order, and harmony of His creation. First, the heavens, the zodiacal Signs, the stars, and the mysterious phenomena that we see above us; then the earth, and the perfect balance of life and forces therein, with man as an important factor, but not the only factor; then, the inexhaustible sources of energy, of which God alone is the fountain-head, but which come to us in measured proportions, as needed; and lastly, Life and Death itself, which will pass away, but God will remain. A noble passage, and a fine vindication of God's wisdom and providence in dealing with His creatures.

1964. Literally, "We are the Heim, or Inheritors." Cf. iii, 180: "To God belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth." See also the latter part of n. 988 to vi. 156.

24. ~~Who~~ Who are known those of you
Who hasten forward, and those
Who lag behind.¹⁹⁶⁵

25. Assuredly it is thy Lord
Who will gather them together:
For He is Perfect in Wisdom
And Knowledge.

۲۴- وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَقِدِّينَ مِنْكُمْ

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ ۝

۲۵- وَإِنْ رِزْقُكَ هُوَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ

إِنَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝

C. 120.—Man's origin was from dust, lowly;
(xv. 26-30.) But his rank was raised above that
Of other creatures because God breathed
Into him His spirit. Jealousy and arrogance
Caused the fall of Iblis, the Power of Evil:
But no power has Evil o'er those sincere
Souls who worship God and seek His Way.
Many are the gates of Evil, but Peace
And dignified joy will be the goal
Of those whom the Grace of God has made His own.

SECTION 3.

26. ~~We~~ We created man from sounding
clay,¹⁹⁶⁶
From mud moulded into shape;

27. And the ~~jian~~ race, We had
Created before, from the fire
Of a scorching wind.¹⁹⁶⁷

28. Behold! thy Lord said
To the angels: "I am about
To create man, from sounding clay,
From mud moulded into shape;

۲۶- وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ
مِنْ حَمِإٍ مَسْنُونٍ ۝

۲۷- وَالْإِنِّاءَ خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ
كَلَرِ السُّمُورِ ۝

۲۸- وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ
بَشَرًا مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمِإٍ مَسْنُونٍ ۝

1965. Cf. ix. 100, where the *Sābiqūn* may perhaps correspond to the *Mustaqdīmīn* here. In that case the two classes are those who are the first to accept Faith and do deeds of righteousness and those who come later, but are still numbered with the righteous. A second alternative meaning may be: "those who preceded you in point of time and those who come after you in point of time; they are all known to God, and He will gather them all together on the Day of Judgment."

1966. *Ṣalṣāl*: dry clay which produces a sound, like pottery. Cf. lv. 14. Taking verses 26 and 29 together, I understand the meaning to be: that man's body was formed from wet clay moulded into shape and then dried until it could emit sound (perhaps referring to speech); that it was then further fashioned and completed; that into the animal form thus fashioned was breathed the spirit of God, which gave it a superiority over other Creation; and that the order, for obedience was then given.

1967. Cf. vi. 100, and n. 929.

29. "When I have fashioned him
(In due proportion) and breathed
Into him of My spirit,
Fall ye down in obeisance
Unto him."¹⁹⁶⁸

30. So the angels prostrated themselves,
All of them together:

31. Not so ¹⁹⁶⁹ Iblis: ¹⁹⁷⁰ he refused to be
Among those who prostrated
themselves.¹⁹⁷¹

32. (God) said: "O Iblis!
What is your reason
For not being among those
Who prostrated themselves?"

33. (Iblis) said: "I am not one
To prostrate myself to man,
Whom Thou didst create
From sounding clay, from mud
Moulded into shape."

34. (God) said: "Then get thee out
From here; for thou art
Rejected, accursed."

35. "And the Curse shall be
On thee till the Day of
Judgment."¹⁹⁷²

٢٩- قَالَا سَوَّيْنَاهُ
وَنَفَخْتُ فِيْهِ مِنْ رُّوْحِيْ
فَسَجَدُوْا لَهٗ سَاجِدِيْنَ ۝

٣٠- فَسَجَدَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ اٰجَعُوْنَ ۝

٣١- اِلَّا اِبْلٰسَ
اَلَمْ يَكُنْ مَعَ السَّاجِدِيْنَ ۝

٣٢- قَالَ يٰٓاِبْلٰسُ مَا لَكَ
اَلَمْ تَكُنْ مَعَ السَّاجِدِيْنَ ۝

٣٣- قَالَ لَمَّا اَكُنْ اِلَّا سَجَدَ لِاٰدَمَ
خَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ صَلٰلٍ
مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ۝

٣٤- قَالَ فَاخْرِجْ مِنْهَا
فَاِنَّكَ رَٰجِعٌ ۝

٣٥- وَاِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَۃَ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الدِّیْنِ ۝

1968. Among other passages where the creation of Adam is referred to, cf. the following: ii 30-39; vii. 11-25. Note that here the emphasis is on three points: (1) the breathing of God's spirit into man, i.e., the faculty of God-like knowledge and will, which, if rightly used, would give man superiority over other creatures; (2) the origin of evil in arrogance and jealousy on the part of Satan, who saw only the lower side of man (his clay) and failed to see the higher side, the faculty brought in by the spirit of God; (3) that this evil only touches those who yield to it, and has no power over God's sincere servants, purified by His grace (xv. 40, 42).

1969. Cf. n. 49 to ii. 34.

1970. Iblis: the name has in it the root-idea of desperateness or rebellion. Cf. n. 52 to ii. 36.

1971. Apparently Iblis's arrogance had two grounds: (1) that man was made of clay while he was made of fire; (2) that he did not wish to do what others did. Both grounds were false; (1) because man had the spirit of God breathed into him; (2) because contempt of the angels who obeyed God's word showed not Iblis's superiority but his inferiority. The word "basha" for man (verse 33) suggests a gross physical body.

1972. After the Day of Judgment the whole constitution of the universe will be different. There will be a new world altogether, on a wholly different plane. (Cf. xxi. 104.)

36. (Iblis) said: "O my Lord!
Give me then respite¹⁹⁷³
Till the Day
The (dead) are raised."

٣٦- قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي
إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ○

37. (God) said: "Respite
Is granted thee—

٣٧- قَالَ وَأَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ ○

38. "Till the Day
Of the Time Appointed."

٣٨- إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ ○

39. (Iblis) said: "O my Lord!
Because Thou hast put me¹⁹⁷⁴
In the wrong, I will
Make (wrong) fair-seeming
To them on the earth,
And I will put them¹⁹⁷⁵
All in the wrong,—

٣٩- قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي
لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ○

40. "Except Thy servants among them,
Sincere and purified
(By Thy grace)."

٤٠- إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ○

41. (God) said: "This (Way
Of My sincere servants) is
Indeed a Way that leads
Straight to Me."¹⁹⁷⁶

٤١- قَالَ هَذَا
صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ○

1973. What was this respite? The curse on Iblis remained, i.e., he was deprived of God's grace and became in the spiritual world what an outlaw is in a political kingdom. An earthly kingdom may not be able to catch and destroy an outlaw. But God is Omnipotent, and such power as Iblis may have can only come through the respite granted by God. The respite then is what is expressed in xv. 39 below. In God's grant of limited free-will to man is implied the faculty of choosing between good and evil, and this faculty is exercised through the temptations and allurements put forward by Satan, "the open enemy" of man. This is for the period of man's probation on this earth. Even so, no temptations have power over the sincere worshippers of God, who are purified by His grace.

1974. *Agwaītanī*: 'thrown me out of the way, put me in the wrong': Cf. vii. 16. Satan as the Power of Evil cannot be straight or truthful even before God. By his own arrogance and rebellion he fell; he attributes this to God. Between God's righteous judgment and Satan's snares and temptations there cannot be the remotest comparison. Yet he presumes to put them on an equal footing. He is taking advantage of the respite.

1975. Iblis (the Rebellious) is powerless against God. He turns therefore against man, and becomes Satan (the Enemy).

1976. To be sincere in the worship of God is to obtain purification from all stain of evil and exemption from all influence of evil. It changes the whole nature of man. After that, evil cannot touch him. Evil will acknowledge him to be beyond its power and will not even tempt him. Apart from such purified souls, every one who worships God invites God's grace to protect him. But if he puts himself in the way of wrong and deliberately chooses evil, he must take the consequences. The blame is not even on Satan, the power of evil: it is on the sinner himself, who puts himself into his power: xiv. 22; xv, 42,

42. "For over My servants
No authority shalt thou
Have, except such as
Put themselves in the wrong
And follow thee."

۴۲- إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ
إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَايِبِينَ ○

43. And verily, Hell
Is the promised abode
For them all!

۴۳- وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ
لَمَوْعِدُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ○

44. To it are seven Gates :¹⁹⁷⁷
For each of those Gates
Is a (special) class
(Of sinners) assigned.

۴۴- لَهَا سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَابٍ
لِكُلِّ بَابٍ قَوْمٌ مُّسَوِّمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

SECTION 4.

45. The righteous (will be)
Amid Gardens
And fountains
(Of clear-flowing water).

۴۵- إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ
وَعُيُونٍ ○

46. (Their greeting will be):
"Enter ye here
In Peace and Security."

۴۶- اُدْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ أَوْسِينَ ○

47. And We shall remove
From their hearts any
Lurking sense of injury:¹⁹⁷⁸
(They will be) brothers
(Joyfully) facing each other
On thrones (of dignity).

۴۷- وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ
مِّنْ غِلٍّ
إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِلِينَ ○

48. No sense of fatigue
Shall touch them,
Nor shall they (ever)
Be asked to leave.

۴۸- لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُ فِيهَا نَصَبٌ
وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيهَا بِئْسَ جَنِّينَ ○

1977. Seven is a mystic number. The ways of sin are numerous, and if they are classified into seven, each of them points to a Gate that leads to Hell.

Apart from the literal meaning, which is itself based on metaphors, the whole of this section and indeed of this Sūra, is full of mystic meaning, which it is outside the power or scope or limits of a running Commentary to expound adequately.

1978. Cf. vii. 43, and n. 1021. The hearts and minds will be so purified that all past rancour, jealousy, or sense of injury will be obliterated. The true Brotherhood will be realised there, when each will have his own dignity; there will be no question of invidious comparisons; each will face the others with joy and confidence. There will be no sense of toil or fatigue, and the joy will last for ever.

49. Tell my servants¹⁹⁷⁹
That I am indeed
The Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful;

٣٩- تَبَيَّنَ عِبَادِي
أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝

50. And that My Penalty
Will be indeed
The most grievous Penalty.

٥٠- وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ ۝

C. 121.—God's Grace and Mercy are always
(xv. 51-81.) First, but His Justice and Wrath will seize
Those who defy His Law. Even when
The unspeakable crimes of the Cities
Of the Plain made their destruction
Inevitable, God's message of Mercy
To mankind was sent to Abraham
And of safety to Lot. The last remnants
Of sin will be cut off, and the Signs
And Tokens thereof are plain for all
To see. The proud Companions of the Wood
And the builders of Rocky Fortresses
Were all swept away because of their sins.

51. Tell them about
The guests of Abraham.¹⁹⁸⁰

٥١- وَبَيَّنَّهُمْ عَنْ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۝

52. When they entered his presence
And said, "Peace!"
He said, "We feel
Afraid of you!"¹⁹⁸¹

٥٢- إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا
قَالَ إِنَّا مِنْكُمْ وَجَلُونَ ۝

53. They said: "Fear not!
We give thee glad tidings

٥٣- قَالُوا لَا تَوْجَلْ إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ

1979. We must realise both sides of God's attributes: His mercy, grace, and forgiveness are unbounded; if we reject all this, His justice and punishment will also be beyond all that we can conceive.

1980. In illustration of the contrasts between Good and Evil, and the consequences that flow from them, we have now a reference to four incidents from the past, viz.: (1) an incident from the story of Abraham; (2) from that of Lot, nephew of Araham, and the end of the Cities of the Plain, which he was sent to warn; (3) the People of the Wood; and (4) the People of the Rocky Tract (*Hijr*), after whom this Sûra is called. As usual, the recital of God's abounding grace comes first.

1981. For a full understanding of this reference to the angels who were Abraham's guests and came to announce the birth of a son to him in his old age, read xi. 69-73 and notes. The appearance of two strangers of uncommon appearance, who refused to partake of the host's sumptuous hospitality, made Abraham at first suspicious and afraid.

Of a son endowed
With wisdom." 1982

54. He said: "Do ye give me
Glad tidings that old age
Has seized me? Of what,
Then, is your good news?"

55. They said: "We give thee
Glad tidings in truth:
Be not in despair!"

56. He said: "And who
Despairs of the mercy
Of his Lord, but such
As go astray?" 1983

57. Abraham said: 1984 "What
then
Is the business on which
Ye (have come), O ye
Messengers (of God)?"

58. They said: "We have been
Sent to a people
(Deep) in sin," 1985

59. "Excepting the adherents
Of Laṭ: them we are certainly

يُغْلِبُهُ عَلَيْهِمْ

٥٣- قَالَ ابْتَهِمُونِي عَلَىٰ أَنْ مَسَّنِيَ الْكِبَرُ
فِيهِ تَبَشِّرُونَ

٥٥- قَالُوا بَشِّرْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ
فَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْفَرِطِينَ

٥٦- قَالَ وَمَنْ يَفْقَهُ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّهِ
إِلَّا الضَّالُّونَ

٥٧- قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ
إِيَّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ

٥٨- قَالُوا إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ
مُتَجَرِّمِينَ

٥٩- إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ إِنَّا

1982. The birth of a son in old age to a sonless father was glad tidings to Abraham personally. The birth of a son endowed with wisdom promised something infinitely more. Considering that the angels were divine messengers, the wisdom referred to was divine wisdom, and the event became an event of prime importance in the world's religious history. For Abraham became, through his progeny, the root of the three great universal religions diffused throughout the world.

1983. Notice the gentle humour in the slight misunderstandings, which are no sooner expressed than they are removed.

1984. When cordial understanding was established between Abraham and his guests, and probably when the guests were about to depart, Abraham put a question to them: "What is the mission on which 'you are going?" It was further implied: "Is there anything I can do to help?" But no. The mission was one of Punishment for abominable sins. Note that the mention of God's Wrath is always linked with that of God's Mercy, and the Mercy comes first. The same angels that came to punish Sodom and Gomorrah were charged first to give the good news of God's Mercy to Abraham in the shape of a long line of Teachers of Righteousness.

1985. The Cities of the Plain round the Dead Sea, which to this day is called the Baḥr Lūṭ. They were given to unspeakable abominations. Read in this connection xi. 77-83 and notes.

(Charged) to save
(from harm),—¹⁹⁸⁶

All—

60. "Except his wife, who,
We have ascertained,
Will be among those
Who will lag behind."¹⁹⁸⁷

SECTION 5.

61. ~~At~~ length when the messengers
Arrived among the adherents¹⁹⁸⁸
Of Lūt,

62. He said: "Ye appear
To be uncommon folk."

63. They said: "Yea,
We have come to thee
To accomplish that
Of which they doubt."¹⁹⁸⁹

64. "We have brought to thee
That which is inevitably¹⁹⁹⁰
Due, and assuredly
We tell the truth.

65. "Then travel by night
With thy household,
When a portion of the night
(Yet remains), and do thou

لَتَجِدُوهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝

٦٠- إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ قَدَرْنَا
لَهَا لَوْنٌ غَيْرِينَ ۝

٦١- فَلَمَّا جَاءَ آلَ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ۝

٦٢- قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ ۝

٦٣- قَالُوا بَلْ جِئْنَاكَ
بِمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَسْتَمِرُونَ ۝

٦٤- وَآتَيْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَأَنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ۝

٦٥- فَانْصِرْ بِأَهْلِكَ
بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ

1986. Here, again, God's saving Grace is linked with His Wrath, and is mentioned first.

1987. See xi. 81, and n. 1577.

1988. *Āl* means people who adhere to the ways and teaching of a great Teacher; e. g., *Āl-i-Muḥammadi*: it does not necessarily mean race or descendants. *Ahl* (xv. 65 below) usually implies "household" but may be taken in an extended sense to include People generally: see xv. 67. *Qaum* (xv. 62) may be any collection or aggregate of people. In xi 70 the hostile inhabitants of the Cities of the Plain are called the *qaum-i-Lūt* (the People of Lūt). *Aṭṭab* (companions) refers to a Group rather than to a People: Cf. xv. 78.

1989. The unusual appearance of the angels struck Lot as it had struck Abraham. Knowing the abominable vices to which the Cities were addicted, he feared to entertain handsome young men. They at once disclosed their mission to him in mystic language. In effect they said: "You, Lot, have been preaching in vain to these wicked Cities. When you warn them of their inevitable end, Destruction, they laugh and doubt. Now their doubt will be resolved. Their destruction will be accomplished before the morning."

1990. Another meaning of *Al-Haqq*: the Punishment which is justly and inevitably due, which must certainly come to pass. Cf. xxii. 18.

Bring up the rear :
Let no one amongst you
Look back, but pass on
Whither ye are ordered."

66. And We made known
This decree to him,
That the last remnants
Of those (sinners) should be
Cut off by the morning.¹⁹⁹¹

67. The inhabitants of the City
Came in (mad) joy
(At news of the young men).¹⁹⁹²

68. Lot said : " These are
My guests: disgrace me not :

69. " But fear God,
And shame me not."

70. They said : " Did we not
Forbid thee (to speak)
For all and sundry ? " ¹⁹⁹³

71. He said : " There are
My daughters (to marry),
If ye must act (so). " ¹⁹⁹⁴

72. Verily, by thy life (O Prophet),
In their wild intoxication,

وَالَّذِينَ أَذْهَبْنَاهُمْ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتُونَ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ
وَأَمْضُوا حَيْثُ تُؤْمَرُونَ ○

٦٦- وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ ذَلِكَ الْأَمَرَ
أَنَّهُ دَابِرُهُمْ مَقْطُوعٌ مُصْبِحِينَ ○

٦٧- وَجَاءَ أَهْلُ الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ○

٦٨- قَالَ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ ضَيْفِي فَلَا تَفْضَحُون ○

٦٩- وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُخْزُون ○

٧٠- قَالُوا أَوَلَمْ نَنْهَكَ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ○

٧١- قَالَ هَؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ ○

٧٢- لَعَنَّاكَ إِنَّهُمْ لَغَفَى سَكَرَتِهِمْ

1991. As the last remnants of the wicked were to be cut off, and as the Mercy of God wished to save every true soul who might be with Lot, God's decree was made known to Lot, so that he might save his adherents.

1992. They were addicted to unnatural crime, and the news of the advent of handsome young men inflamed them. How true it is that at the very verge of destruction, men rush blindly to their fate, and cut off any last hope of repentance and mercy for themselves. Cf. xv. 72 below.

1993. I understand the meaning to be that Lot, the only righteous man in the City, had frequently remonstrated with the inhabitants against their unnatural crimes, and they had forbidden him to speak to them again on behalf of any one, "as if" (they might tauntingly say) "he was the protector of all and sundry".

Some Commentators understand the verse to mean : 'Did we not forbid thee to entertain any strangers?'

1994. Cf. xi. 78, n. 1575. "My daughters" in the mouth of a venerable man may mean young girls of the City, which would be appropriate considering the large number of men who came to besiege Lot's house.

They wander in distraction,
To and fro.¹⁹⁹⁵

73. But the (mighty) Blast¹⁹⁹⁶
Overtook them before morning,

74. And We turned (the Cities)
Upside down, and rained down
On them brimstones
Hard as baked clay.¹⁹⁹⁷

75. Behold! in this are Signs
For those who by tokens
Do understand.

76. And the (Cities were)
Right on the high-road.¹⁹⁹⁸

77. Behold! in this
Is a Sign
For those who believe!¹⁹⁹⁹

78. And the Companions of the Wood²⁰⁰⁰
Were also wrongdoers;

يَعْمَهُونَ ○

٤٣- فَآخَذَ اللَّهُ الصَّيْحَةَ مُشْرِقِينَ ○

٤٤- فَجَعَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ ○

٤٥- إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُتَوَسِّلِينَ ○

٤٦- وَإِنَّهَا لَیْسَیْلٌ مُّقْتَدِرٌ ○

٤٧- إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ○

٤٨- وَإِنْ كَانَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ لَظَالِمِينَ ○

1995. The wild, mad fury of passion and sin attains its own destruction and cuts off the last hope of repentance or mercy.

1996. *As-Saihat*, the mighty Blast, is mentioned as accompanying earthquakes: Cf. xi. 67, 94. Here it was the violent wind and noise accompanying the shower of brimstones, possibly with some volcanic action.

1997. Cf. xi. 82 and notes, in which the word *Sijfil* and its origin are explained.

1998. The Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were utterly destroyed, and even their precise position cannot be identified. But the brimstone plain of the tract still exists, right on the highway between Arabia and Syria. To the traveller in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea the whole locality presents a scene of dismal desolation which truly suggests the awful punishment for unspeakable crimes.

1999. Verse 75 refers to all who have the intelligence to grasp the Signs of God. Verses 76-77 specially refer to those who use the Arabia-Syria highroad. The desolation is specially brought home to them.

2000. "Companions of the Wood": *As-ḥāb ul Aikaṭi*. Perhaps *Aika* is after all a proper noun, the name of a town or tract. Who were the Companions of the Aika? They are mentioned four times in the Qur-ān, viz., here, and in xxvi 176-191; xxxviii. 13; and l. 14. The only passage in which any details are given is xxvi. 176-191. There we are told that their Prophet was Shu'aib, and other details given correspond to those of the Madyan, to whom Shu'aib was sent as Apostle: see vii. 85-93. In my notes to that passage I have discussed the question of Shu'aib and the Madyan people. It is reasonable to suppose that the Companions of the Wood were either the same as the Madyan, or a Group among them or in their neighbourhood.

79. So We exacted retribution
From them. They were both ²⁰⁰¹
On an open highway,
Plain to see.

٤٩- فَأَتَقْنَا مِنْهُمْ
وَأَتَمْنَا لِيَامَاوِ قُتَيْبِينَ ۝

SECTION 6.

80. ~~At~~The Companions of the Rocky
Tract ²⁰⁰²
Also rejected the apostles :

٨٠- وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ الْحِجْرِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

81. We sent them Our Signs,
But they persisted
In turning away from them.

٨١- وَأَتَيْنَاهُمُ آيَاتِنَا
فَكَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ۝

82. Out of the mountains ²⁰⁰³
Did they hew their edifices,
(Feeling themselves) secure.

٨٢- وَكَانُوا يَحِثُّونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا
أَمِينِينَ ۝

83. But the (mighty) Blast ²⁰⁰⁴
Seized them of a morning,

٨٣- فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الضَّيْحَةُ مُضِيحِينَ ۝

84. And of no avail to them
Was all that they did
(With such art and care !)

٨٤- فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ فَاكَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ۝

C. 122.—But God's Creation doth bear witness
(xv. 85-99.) To God's Design and Mercy. His Plan
Is sure. His gift of the glorious Qur-ān
Is more than any worldly goods can be.
So, while we denounce Sin openly,
Let us be gentle and kind, and adore
And serve our Lord all our lives.

85. ~~We~~ e created not the heavens,
The earth, and all between them,

٨٥- وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا

2001. Both : *i. e.*, The Cities of the Plain and the Companions of the Aika.

2002. "The Rocky Tract" is undoubtedly a geographical name. On the maps of Arabia will be found a tract called the *Hijr*, north of Medina. Jabal *Hijr* is about 150 miles north of Medina. The tract would fall on the highway to Syria. This was the country of the *Thamūd*. For them and the country see vii, 73, n. 1043.

2003. Remains of these rock edifices in the *Hijr* are still found, and the City of Petra is not more than 380 miles from Jabal *Hijr*. See n. 1043 to vii. 73. "Petra" in Greek means "Rock". For the Inscriptions found there, and their significance, see Appendix IX to S. xxvi.

2004. The mighty rumbling noise and wind accompanying an earthquake. See vii, 78, n. 1047.

But for just ends.²⁰⁰⁵
And the Hour is surely
Coming (when this will be
manifest).

So overlook (any faults)
With gracious forgiveness.²⁰⁰⁶

86. For verily it is thy Lord
Who is the Master-Creator,²⁰⁰⁷
Knowing all things.

87. And We have bestowed
Upon thee the Seven
Oft-repeated (Verses)²⁰⁰⁸
And the Grand Qur-ān.

88. Strain not thine eyes
(Wistfully) at what We
Have bestowed on certain
classes²⁰⁰⁹
Of them, nor grieve over them:²⁰¹⁰

إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ
وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ
فَاصْفَحِ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيلَ ○

○ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْخَلْقُ الْعَلِيمُ ○

٨٦- وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَاكَ سَبْعًا
مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمَ ○

٨٨- لَا تَسْتَدِنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ
إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ
وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ

2005. God's Creation is all for a true, just, and righteous purpose. Cf. x. 5. It is not for mere whim or sport : xxi. 16.

2006. The Hour will not be long delayed when the true Design and Pattern of Life will be manifest. We must not be impatient, if there appear to be, to our limited vision, apparent injustices. We must bear and forbear, and as far as our own personal feelings are concerned, we must overlook other people's faults with "a gracious forgiveness".

2007. *Khallāq*: the emphatic intensive form, as meaning the Creator, Who is perfect in His skill and knowledge, and Whose creation answers perfectly to His design. Therefore no one should think that anything has gone wrong in God's creation. What may seem out of joint is merely the result of our short-sighted standards. It often happens that what appears to us to be evil or imperfect or unjust is a reflection of our own imperfect minds. See the next two verses and notes.

2008. The Seven Oft-repeated Verses are usually understood to be the Opening Sūra, the *Fātiḥa*. They sum up the whole teaching of the Qur-ān. What can be a more precious gift to a Muslim than the glorious Qur-ān or any Sūra of it? Worldly wealth, honour, possessions, or anything else, sinks into insignificance in comparison with it.

2009. It may be that other people have worldly goods which worldly men envy. Do they necessarily bring happiness? Even the temporary pleasure that they may give is not unmixed with spiritual poisons, and even so, will not last. The man of God looks with wistful eyes at other things,—the favour and countenance of God.

2010. The man of God, in his human love and sympathy, may grieve over certain classes of people who are puffed up with false notions and callous to the Message of God. But he should not make himself unhappy. There is no flaw in God's Plan, and it must prevail. This was addressed in the first instance to Muṣṭafā, but in a minor degree, it applies to all righteous men.

But lower thy wing
 (in gentleness)²⁰¹¹
 To the Believers.

89. And say: "I am indeed he
 That warneth openly
 And without ambiguity,"—²⁰¹²

90. (Of just such wrath)
 As We sent down
 On those who divided
 (Scripture into arbitrary
 parts),—²⁰¹³

91. (So also on such)
 As have made the Qur-ān
 Into shreds (as they please).²⁰¹⁴

92. Therefore, by thy Lord,
 We will, of a surety,
 Call them to account,

93. For all their deeds.²⁰¹⁵

94. Therefore expound openly
 What thou art commanded,
 And turn away from those
 Who join false gods with God.

95. For sufficient are We
 Unto thee against those

وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

٨٩- وَقُلْ إِنِّي أَنَا النَّذِيرُ الْمُبِينُ ۝

٩٠- كَمَا أَنزَلْنَا
 عَلَى الْمُفْتَسِمِينَ ۝

٩١- الَّذِينَ جَعَلُوا الْقُرْآنَ عِضِينَ ۝

٩٢- قَوْلِكَ لَسَنَأَعْتَبُكُمُ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝

٩٣- عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝

٩٤- فَأُصَدِّقْ بِمَا تُوَمَّرُ
 وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۝

٩٥- إِنَّا كَافٍكَ

2011. The metaphor is from a bird who lowers her wing in tender solicitude for her little ones. Cf. xvii. 24, where it is applied to "lowering the wing" to aged parents.

2012. In the ministry of Muṣṭafā there was no mincing of matters, no compromises with evil, Evil was denounced in unambiguous terms.

2013. The Commentators differ as to the precise signification of verses 90 and 91. Are the persons referred to in the two verses the same, or different? And who were they? I adopt the view, for which there is good authority, that the two classes of persons were different, but similar. Verse 90, I think, refers to the Jews and Christians, who took out of Scripture what suited them, and ignored or rejected the rest: ii. 85, 101. For verse 91 see next note

2014. The Meccan Pagans, in the early days of Islam, in order to dishonour and ridicule the Qur-ān, divided what was so far revealed, into bits, and apportioned them to people coming on pilgrimage to Mecca by different routes, slandering and abusing the Apostle of God.

2015. Those who ridicule Scripture in any form will all be called to account for their insolence, for they are all alike.

Who scoff,—²⁰¹⁶

96. Those who adopt, with God,
Another god: but soon
Will they come to know.
97. We do indeed know
How thy heart is distressed²⁰¹⁷
At what they say.
98. But celebrate the praises
Of thy Lord, and be of those
Who prostrate themselves
In adoration.
99. And serve thy Lord
Until there come unto thee
The Hour that is Certain.²⁰¹⁸

الْمُسْتَهْزِئِينَ ۝

۹۶-الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ

فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

۹۷-وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ

بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ۝

۹۸-فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ

وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ۝

۹۹-وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ

حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ ۝



2016. If the whole world is ranged against the man of God, as was at one time the case with the Apostle, and they scoff at all that is sacred, the sense of God's presence and protection outweighs all. And after all, the scoffers are creatures of a day. Soon will they find their level, and be undeceived as to all their falsehoods. But the Truth of God endures for ever.

2017. Literally, 'that thy breast is constrained'.

2018. *Yaqīn*: Certainty; the Hour that is Certain; death.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA XVI (*Nahl*)

Chronologically this Sūra, like the six which preceded it, belongs to the late Meccan period, except perhaps verse 110 and some of the verses that follow. But the chronology has no significance. In subject-matter it sums up, from a new point of view, the arguments on the great questions of God's dealings with man, His Self-revelation to man, and how the Messengers and the Message are writ large in every phase of God's Creation and the life of Man. The new point of view is that Nature points to Nature's God.

Summary

Everything in Creation proclaims the glory of God. To man is given dominion over Nature, that man may recognise God's Unity and God's Truth (xvi. 1-25, and C. 123).

Man should never lose sight of his goal, which is the Good, or dispute with the great Teachers, who are sent to all Peoples, to bring about Unity: all creatures serve God (xvi. 26-50, and C. 124)

God's favours and man's ingratitude recounted His Signs in the rain-bearing clouds, the cattle that give milk, the bee that produces honey, the wonderful relations of family and social life, and the refinements and comforts of civilization (xvi. 51-83, and C. 125).

The Messengers of Truth will bear witness against those who reject the Truth. God will judge us according to our faith and deeds (xvi. 84-100, and C. 126).

The Qur-ān is true: it guides and gives glad tidings. Believe, and make the most of Life in all things good and lawful. Follow the example of Abraham: be true in Faith and righteous, and do good (xvi. 101-128, and C. 127).

C. 123.—God's Command must inevitably
 (xvi. 1-25) Come to pass. But all His Creation
 Proclaims His glory, and leads to His Truth.
 In all things has He furnished man
 With favours innumerable,
 To lead and guide him and bring him
 To Himself. Why then does man
 Refuse the Truth, except for arrogance?
 Why does he run after false gods,
 Thus acting against his own lights
 And misleading others less blest in knowledge?

Sura XVI.

Nahl, or The Bee.

*In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

1. (Inevitably) cometh (to pass)
The Command of God: ²⁰¹⁹
Seek ye not then
To hasten it: glory to Him,
And far is He above
Having the partners
They ascribe unto Him!
2. He doth send down His angels
With inspiration of His Command,
To such of His servants
As He pleaseth, (saying):
"Warn (Man) that there is
No god but I: so do
Your duty unto Me." ²⁰²⁰
3. He has created the heavens
And the earth for just ends: ²⁰²¹
Far is He above having
The partners they ascribe to Him!
4. He has created man
From a sperm-drop;
And behold this same (man)
Becomes an open disputer! ²⁰²²



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

۱- أَتَىٰ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ
فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ
سُبْحَنَهُ
وَتَعْلَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

۲- يُنْزِلُ الْمَلَكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ
عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ
أَن أُنْذِرُوا أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
أَنَا فَاتَّقُونِ

۳- خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ
تَعْلَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

۴- خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ
فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ

2019. This is an answer to the taunt of the Pagans, who said: "If there is a god, the One True God, as you say, with unified control, why does He not punish the wrong-doers at once?" The answer is: "The decree of God will inevitably come to pass; it will come soon enough; when it comes, you will wish it were delayed; how foolish of you to wish even to cut off your last hope of forgiveness?"

2020. The Pagans, with their multiplicity of gods and goddesses, good and evil, could play one off against another. That is mere mockery of religion. With such conceptions, man cannot understand the Unity of Design in the Universe nor realise the Power and Glory of the One True God, to Whom alone worship and service are due.

2021. Not for sport, or fortuitously and without Design. Cf. xv. 85. Surely the Unity of Design in Creation also proves the Unity of God their Creator.

2022. Man's physical origin is lowly. Yet do men go back to material things, and neglect or dispute about the highest things in Life.

5. And cattle He has created²⁰²³
For you (men): from them
Ye derive warmth,
And numerous benefits,²⁰²⁴
And of their (meat) ye eat.

6. And ye have a sense
Of pride and beauty in them
As ye drive them home
In the evening, and as ye
Lead them forth to pasture
In the morning.²⁰²⁵

7. And they carry your heavy loads
To lands that ye could not
(Otherwise) reach except with²⁰²⁶
Souls distressed: for your Lord
Is indeed Most Kind, Most
Merciful.

8. And (He has created) horses,
Mules, and donkeys, for you
To ride and use for show;²⁰²⁷
And he has created (other) things
Of which ye have no knowledge.²⁰²⁸

هـ- وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا

لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ

وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ۝

و- وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ

حِينَ تَرْجِعُونَ

وَحِينَ تَذَرُوهَا ۝

ز- وَتَحْمِلُ أَرْغَامَكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَلْبَانٍ لَّكُمْ تَكُونُوا

بِالْغَنِيِّ إِلَّا بِإِشْقِ الْأَنْفُسِ

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝

هـ- وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْهَيْالَ وَالْجَمِيزَ

لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً

وَيَخْلُقَ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

2023. Why will you go back to material things, considering that material things are made subservient to your use and enjoyment in various ways as suggested in the clauses that follow.

2024. From wool, and hair, and skins, and milk. Camel's hair makes warm robes and blankets; and certain kinds of goats yield hair which makes similar fabrics. Sheep yield wool, and Llamas alpaca for similar uses. The skins and furs of many animals yield warm raiment or make warm rugs or bedding. The females of many of these animals yield good warm milk, a nourishing and wholesome diet. Then the flesh of many of these animals is good to eat. There are other uses, which the animals serve, and which are referred to later.

2025. The good man is proud of his cattle and is good to them. As they go to, and return from, pasture, morning and evening, he has a sense of his power and wealth and their beauty and docility. Will not man turn from these material facts to the great spiritual truths and purpose behind them?

2026. The cattle and animals also carry loads, and thus make inter-communication between different lands easy. But for them there would have been many difficulties, not only physical, but psychological. Weary men carrying loads are in no mood for social and spiritual intercourse. This intercourse is made possible by the kindness and mercy of God.

2027. Horses, mules, and donkeys as well as other animals may be beasts of burden, but they may also be pedigree animals bred for beauty and for all those more refined uses, such as processions, in which grace and elegance is the predominant feature.

2028. If we examine the history of transport, there have been vast changes through the ages, from rude pack animals to fine equipages, and then through mechanical contrivances, such means of transport as elegant coaches, tramways and railways, useful motor lorries and Rolls-Royce cars, and air-ships and aeroplanes of all descriptions. At any given point of time, many of these were yet unknown to man. Nor can we suppose the limit to have been reached now or that it will ever be reached at any future time. Through the mind and ingenuity of man it is God that creates new things hitherto unknown to man.

9. And unto God leads straight²⁰²⁹
The Way, but there are ways
That turn aside: if God
Had willed, He could have
Guided all of you.

SECTION 2.

10. It is He Who sends down
Rain from the sky:
From it ye drink,
And out of it (grows)
The vegetation on which
Ye feed your cattle.
11. With it He produces
For you corn, olives,
Date-palms, grapes,
And every kind of fruit:
Verily in this is a Sign
For those who give thought.²⁰³⁰
12. He has made subject to you
The Night and the Day;²⁰³¹
The Sun and the Moon;
And the Stars are in subjection
By His Command: verily
In this are Signs
For men who are wise.

٩- وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ
وَمِنْهَا جَاوِزٌ
وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَىٰكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝

١٠- هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ
وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ ۝

١١- يُخْرِجُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَ
التَّخِيلَ وَالْأَعْنَابَ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ۝

١٢- وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ
وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ
بِأَمْرِهِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ۝

2029. Through material things "the Way" does always lead to God. But some minds are so obsessed with material things that they miss the pointers to the spiritual. God could have forced all to the true Way, but in His Will and Plan is the training of man's will, and that is done by the Signs in nature and in Revelation.

2030. The least thought and study of nature will show you God's wise and benign Providence in making the processes of nature subserve man's use and refined life. A higher degree of intelligence and study is required ("men who are wise") to understand God's Signs to man in the processes connected with the heavenly bodies (verse 12). And a still higher spiritual understanding ("men who celebrate His praises" with gratitude) to realise the marvellous gradations, colours, and nuances in the creatures on this little globe of ours (verse 13). Reason this out carefully.

2031. The Night and the Day are caused by astronomical rotations. What is important for man to note is how God has given intelligence to man to make use of this alternation for work and rest; how man can, as soon as he rises from the primitive stage, get over their inequalities by artificial illuminants, such as vegetable or mineral oils, coal, gas, or electricity, which ultimately are derived from the stored-up energy of the sun; how the sun's heat can be tempered by various artificial means and can be stored up for use by man as required; how man can be independent of the tides caused by the moon and the sun, which formerly controlled navigation, but which no longer stand in man's way, with his artificial harbours and great sea-going ships; how navigation was formerly subject to direct observation of the Polar Star and other stars, but how the magnetic needle and charts have now completely altered the position, and man can calculate and to a certain extent control magnetic variations, etc. In such ways the sun, the moon, and the stars themselves become useful servants to him, all by God's gift and His Command, without which there would have been no laws governing them and no intelligence to make use of them.

13. And the things on this earth
Which He has multiplied
In varying colours
(and qualities):²⁰³²
Verily in this is a Sign
For men who celebrate
The praises of God
(in gratitude).²⁰³³

۱۳- وَمَا ذَرَأَ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً
لِّعَوْمٍ يَذْكُرُونَ ○

14. It is He Who has made²⁰³⁴
The sea subject, that ye
May eat thereof flesh
That is fresh and tender,²⁰³⁵
And that ye may extract
Therefrom ornaments to wear;²⁰³⁶
And thou seest the ships
Therein that plough the waves,
That ye may seek (thus)
Of the bounty of God²⁰³⁷
And that ye may be grateful.

۱۴- وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ
لِنَاكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا
وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا
وَتَرَى الْفُلَ مَوْحًا فِيهِ
وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ○

2032. Whose heart has not been moved by the glorious gradation of colours in the sunset clouds? The gradations are infinite, and it is only the eye of an artist that can express their collective beauty. They are but a type of the infinite variety and gradation of qualities in the spiritual sphere even in the little space of our own globe. The big things that can be measured and defined have been spoken of before. Here we have mention of the subtle nuances in the spiritual world which can only be perceived by men who are so high in spiritual insight that their only reaction is to "celebrate the praises of God" in gratitude for His infinite Mercies.

2033. Read again n. 2030 above, and see how subtly we are led up from the perception of the big to the perception of the subtle and delicate colours and qualities in the spiritual world.

2034. We have gone up in a climax of material things from the big to the subtle in the sky and the earth. Here we have another climax as regards the things of the sea. We get the delicate flesh of fishes and marine creatures of all kinds; we get the treasures of the deep: pearls, coral, amber, and things of that kind; and we have the stately ships ploughing the waves, for maritime commerce and intercourse, for unifying mankind, and for realising the spiritual bounty of God, which can best be expressed by the boundless ocean.

2035. Connoisseurs know the delicate flavours of sea fish, such as the pomfret of the Indian Ocean, the herring of the North Atlantic, the mullet of Marseilles, and many another kind. *Tarf*, translated "fresh and tender," also refers to the soft moist nature of fresh fish. It is another wonder of God that salt water should produce flesh of such fresh, tender, and delicate flavour.

2036. Diving for pearls—in both the primitive and the more advanced form—is another instance of man's power over apparently inaccessible depths of the sea.

2037. After the material benefits which we get from the sea, we are asked to consider things of higher import to the spirit of man. There is the beautiful ship which stands as the symbol of international commerce and intercourse, things that may be of material benefit, but which have a higher aspect in unifying man and making his civilisation more universal. These are first steps in seeking of the "bounty of God" through the sea. But there are higher aspects. Navigation and international intercourse increase knowledge, which in its higher aspects should clean the mind and make it fitter to approach God. The salt water, which covers nearly 72 per cent. of the surface of the Globe, is itself a purifying and sanitary agent, and is a good symbol of the higher bounties of God, which are as boundless as the Ocean.

15. And He has set up
On the earth mountains ²⁰³⁸
Standing firm, lest it should
Shake with you; and rivers
And roads; that ye
May guide yourselves; ²⁰³⁹
16. And marks and sign-posts;
And by the stars
(Men) guide themselves. ²⁰⁴⁰
17. As then He Who creates
Like one that creates not?
Will ye not receive admonition? ²⁰⁴¹
18. If ye would count up
The favours of God,
Never would ye be able
To number them: for God
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ²⁰⁴²

١٥- وَالْقَى فِي الْأَرْضِ رَدًى
أَنْ يَتَّبِعَ بِكُمْ وَأَنْهَارًا
وَسُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ۝

١٦- وَعَلَمَاتٍ وَبِالنَّجْمِ
هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ۝

١٧- أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ
أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ۝

١٨- وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ
لَا تُحْصُوهَا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

2038. Cf. xiii. 3 and xv. 9. It is a favourite figure of speech to speak of the earth as a spacious carpet spread beneath our feet and the eternal hills as a steady agent to keep the carpet from rolling or shaking about. In lxxviii. 7 they are spoken of as pegs or stakes.

2039. In this passage (xvi. 15-16) we have the metaphor of the fixed mountains further allegorised. In these verses the key-words are indicated by the symbols for man's Guidance (*tahdāt*). First, the physical symbols are indicated: the mountains that stand firm and do not change from day to day in the landscape, unlike shifting sand-dunes, or the coast line of the sea, or rivers and streams, which frequently change their courses; then we have rivers and roads, which are more precise and therefore more useful, though less permanent; then we have '*al-āmāl*' (sign-posts), any kinds of signs erected by man, like direction posts, light-houses or beacons, or provided in nature, as tall trees, etc., and finally, we have the pole-star, and now the magnetic needle, with its variations marked on navigation charts. All these are symbols for the higher Guidance which God provides for the spirit of man. See next note.

2040. See last note. Let us examine the completed allegory. As there are beacons, landmarks, and signs to show the way to men on the earth, so in the spiritual world. And it is ultimately God Who provides them, and this is His crowning Mercy. Like the mountains there are spiritual Landmarks in the missions of the Great Teachers: they should guide us, or teach us to guide ourselves, and not shake hither and thither like a ship without a rudder or people without Faith. As rivers and streams mark out their channels, smoothing out levels, so we have wholesome Laws and Customs established, to help us in our lives. Then we have the examples of Great Men as further sign-posts: "Lives of great men all remind us, We can make our lives sublime." In long-distance travel, the pole-star and the magnetic needle are our guides: so in our long-distance journey to the other world, we have ultimately to look to heavenly guidance or its reflection in God's Revelation.

2041. The supreme majesty of God having been set out in His favours of all kinds, it will be seen at once that the worship of any other than God is meaningless and ridiculous. Shall we not take the hint and understand?

2042. Of all God's favours innumerable, His Mercy and Forgiveness in the spiritual plane is the greatest, and of eternal value to us in our future Lives.

19. And God doth know
What ye conceal,
And what ye reveal.

20. Those whom they invoke
Besides God create nothing
And are themselves created.²⁰⁴³

21. (They are things) dead,
Lifeless: nor do they know
When they will be raised up.²⁰⁴⁴

SECTION 3.

22. **Y**our God is One God:
As to those who believe not
In the Hereafter, their hearts
Refuse to know, and they
Are arrogant.²⁰⁴⁵

23. Undoubtedly God doth know
What they conceal,
And what they reveal:²⁰⁴⁶
Verily He loveth not the arrogant.

24. When it is said to them,
"What is it that your Lord²⁰⁴⁷

١٩- وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُكْتُمُونَ
وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ○

٢٠- وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ لَا
يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ○

٢١- اَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ اَحْيَاءٍ
وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ اَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ ○

٢٢- اِلَهَهُمُّ اِلَهٌ وَّاحِدٌ
فَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ
مُنْكِرَةٌ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ ○

٢٣- لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسْرُونَ
وَمَا يَعْلَنُونَ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ ○

٢٤- وَاِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ مَاذَا اَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ

2043. God is the only Creator and the Ultimate Reality. Everything else is created by Him, and reflects His glory. How foolish then to worship any other than God!

2044. Idols are dead wood or stone. If men worship stars, or heroes, or prophets, or great men, they too have no life except that which was given by God. In themselves they are lifeless. If they worship figments of the imagination, they are reflections in a double degree, and have no life in themselves. All these things will be raised up on the Last Day, in order that false worshippers may be confronted with them. But they themselves cannot tell when that Day will be.

2045. Everything points to the One True Eternal God. If so, there is a Hereafter, for He has declared it. In so far as people do not believe this, the fault is in their Will: they do not wish to believe, and the motive behind is arrogance, the sin which brought about the fall of Iblis: ii. 34.

2046. Cf. xvi. 19, where the same words refer to man generally. Whether he conceals or reveals what is in his heart, God knows it, and as God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful, His grace is available as His highest favour if man will take it. Here the reference is to those who "refuse to know", who reject God's guidance out of arrogance. God "loveth not the arrogant". Such men deprive themselves of God's grace.

2047. When the arrogant Unbelievers are referred to some definite argument or illustration from Scripture, they dismiss it contemptuously with the remark, "Tales of the ancients!" In this, they are not only playing with their own conscience, but misleading others, with perhaps less knowledge than themselves.

Has revealed?" they say,
"Tales of the ancients!"

25. Let them bear, on the Day
Of Judgment, their own burdens
In full, and also (something)
Of the burdens of those
Without knowledge, whom they ²⁰⁴⁸
Misled. Alas, how grievous
The burdens they will bear!

قَالُوا أَتَأْتِيهِمُ الْآيَاتُ ۖ

يَسْأَلُونَكَ أَتَأْتِيهِمُ الْآيَاتُ
وَمَنْ أَذُنُ الْبَاطِلِ يُضِلُّوهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
الْأَسَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ۚ

C. 124.—In all ages wicked men tried to plot
(xvi. 26-50.) Against God's Way, but they never
Succeeded, and were covered with shame
In ways unexpected. The righteous
See good in God's Word, and their goal
Is the Good. Great Teachers were sent
To all nations, to warn against Evil
And guide to the Right. The penalty
For evil comes in many unexpected
Ways, for Evil is against Nature.
And all Nature proclaims God's Glory
And humbly serves Him, the Lord Supreme.

SECTION 4.

26. Those before them did also
Plot (against God's Way):
But God took their structures
From their foundations, and the ^{roof}
Fell down on them from above;
And the Wrath seized them
From directions they did not
perceive. ²⁰⁴⁹

۲۶- قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
فَأَنَّى اللَّهُ بُنِيَانَهُمْ مِنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ
فَنَزَعَهُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ السَّقْفَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ
وَأَنَّهُمْ الْعَدَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا
يَشْعُرُونَ ۚ

27. Then, on the Day of Judgment,
He will cover them

۲۷- ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَخْرُجُ بَلَدُهُمْ

2048. Their responsibility or crime is twofold: (1) that they rejected God's Message, and (2) that they misled others. Their Penalty will also be double. In vi. 164, we are told that "no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another". This is against the doctrine of vicarious atonement. Every man is responsible for his own sins: but the sin of misleading others is a sin of the misleader himself, and he must suffer the penalty for that also, without relieving those misled, of their responsibility.

2049. Evil will always devise plots against the men of God. So was it with *Mustafa*, and so was it with the apostles before him. But the imposing structures which the ungodly build up (metaphorically) collapse at the Command of God, and they are often punished from quarters from which they least expected punishment. For example, the *Quraish* were confident in their numbers, their organisation, and their superior equipment. But on the field of *Badr* they collapsed where they expected victory.

With shame, and say:
 "Where are My 'partners'
 Concerning whom ye used
 To dispute (with the godly)?"
 Those endued with knowledge²⁰⁵⁰
 Will say: "This Day, indeed,
 Are the Unbelievers covered
 With Shame and Misery,—

وَيَقُولُ آيَن شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ
 كُنْتُمْ تُشَاقُّونَ فِيهِمْ
 قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ إِنَّ الْخِزْيَ الْيَوْمَ
 وَالْشُّوْبَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ۝

28. "(Namely) those whose lives the
 angels

Take in a state of wrong-doing
 To their own souls."²⁰⁵¹
 Then would they offer submission
 (With the pretence), "We did²⁰⁵²
 No evil (knowingly)." (The angels
 Will reply), "Nay, but verily
 God knoweth all that ye did;

۲۸-الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّوهُمْ الْمَلَكَةُ
 طَائِفَى الْمَقْبُورِمْ
 قَالُوا السَّلامَ مَا كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِنْ سُوءٍ
 بَلَى إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ
 بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝

29. "So enter the gates of Hell,
 To dwell therein.
 Thus evil indeed
 Is the abode of the arrogant."

۲۹-وَلَدْخُلُوا أَبْوََابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
 قَلِيلٌ مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ مَكِينِينَ ۝

30. To the righteous
 (When) it is said, "What
 Is it that your Lord²⁰⁵³
 Has revealed?" they say,
 "All that is good." To those
 Who do good, there is good
 In this world, and the Home
 Of the Hereafter is even better.²⁰⁵⁴

۳۰-وَقِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَا أَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ
 قَالُوا خَيْرٌ
 لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ
 وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ ۝

2050. The worshippers of false gods (the ungodly, the Unbelievers) will be unable to reply when brought before the Judgment Seat. The comment of those "endued with knowledge"—the Prophets and Teachers whom they had rejected—will be by way of indictment and explanation of the position of those before the Judgment Seat.

2051. That is, those who died in a state of *kuf'r*, or rebellion against God, which was really wrong-doing against their own souls.

2052. The excuse is a mere pretence. At first they were too dazed to reply. When they reply, they cannot deny the facts, but resort to the sinner's excuse of saying that they sinned through ignorance, and that their motives were not wrong. Such a plea raises a question of hidden thoughts which are difficult to appraise before a human tribunal. But here they are before their Divine Author, Who knows every secret of their souls, and before Whom no false plea can be of any value. So they are condemned.

2053. The contrast and parallelism is with xvi. 24, where the ungodly in their levity and their deliberate rejection of guidance find no profit from God's revelation.

2054. Unlike the ungodly, the good find good everywhere,—in this world and in the Hereafter; because they understand and are in accord with the truths around them.

And excellent indeed is the Home
Of the righteous,—

31. Gardens of Eternity, which they
Will enter: beneath them
Flow (pleasant) rivers: they
Will have therein all
That they wish: thus doth
God reward the righteous,—
32. (Namely) those whose lives
The angels take in a state²⁰⁵⁵
Of purity, saying (to them),
"Peace be on you; enter ye
The Garden, because of (the good)
Which ye did (in the world)."
33. Do the (ungodly) wait until
The angels come to them,
Or there comes the Command
Of thy Lord (for their doom)?²⁰⁵⁶
So did those who went
Before them. But God:
Wronged them not: nay,
They wronged their own souls.
34. But the evil results
Of their deeds overtook them,
And that very (Wrath)
At which they had scoffed
Hemmed them in.

SECTION 5.

35. The worshippers of false gods
Say: "If God had so willed,
We should not have worshipped
Aught but Him—neither we²⁰⁵⁷

وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝

۳۱- جَنَّاتٌ عَدْنٌ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُجْرَى مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ
كَذَلِكَ يَجْزِي اللَّهُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝

۳۲- الَّذِينَ تَتَوَلَّى الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَهِيرِينَ
يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝

۳۳- هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ أَمْرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَمَا ظَنَّهُمْ
اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ۝

۳۴- فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا
وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ
فَمَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَمِئَرُونَ ۝

۳۵- وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
مَا عَبَدْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَنَحْنُ

2055. *In a state of purity*: from the evils of this world, from want of faith and want of grace. Purity from such evil is the mark of true Islam, and those who die in such purity will be received into Felicity with a salutation of Peace.

2056. That is, until death comes to them, or some Punishment in this life itself, which precludes them from repentance and the Mercy of God.

2057. The old, old argument: if God is All-Powerful, why did He not force all persons to His Will? This ignores the limited Free-will granted to man, which is the whole basis of Ethics. God gives man every opportunity of knowing and understanding things, but He does not force him, for that would be against the whole Plan on which our present Life is constituted.

Nor our fathers,—nor should
We have prescribed

Other than His." prohibitions²⁰⁵⁸
So did those
Who went before them.
But what is the mission
Of apostles but to preach
The Clear Message?²⁰⁵⁹

36. For We assuredly sent
Amongst every People an

apostle,²⁰⁶⁰
(With the Command), "Serve
God, and eschew Evil":
Of the people were some whom
God guided, and some
On whom Error became²⁰⁶¹
Inevitably (established). So travel
Through the earth, and see
What was the end of those
Who denied (the Truth).

37. If thou art anxious
For their guidance, yet
God guideth not such
As He leaves to stray,²⁰⁶²
And there is none
To help them.

38. They swear their strongest
oaths²⁰⁶³
By God, that God will not

وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا
حُكَمَانَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
فَهَلْ عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ○

٣٦- وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا
أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ
فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ
فَنَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ○

٣٧- إِنْ تَخُوضْ عَلَى هُدَاهُمْ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ يُضِلُّ
وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ○

٣٨- وَاتَّخَذُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَا

2058. The Pagan Arabs prescribed various arbitrary prohibitions in the matter of meat: see vi. 143-145. These, of course, are not recognised by Islam, which also removed some of the restrictions of the Jewish Law: vi. 146. The general meaning, however, is far wider. Men erect their own taboos and prohibitions, barriers and restrictions, and ascribe them to Religion. This is wrong, and more consonant with Pagan practice than with Islam.

2059. *Clear Message*: *Mubīn*: in three senses: (1) a Message clear and unambiguous; (2) one that makes all things clear to those who try to understand, because it accords with their own nature as created by God; (3) one preached openly and to every one.

2060. Even though God's Signs are everywhere in Nature and in men's own conscience, yet in addition God has sent human Messengers to every People to call their attention to the Good and turn them from Evil. So they cannot pretend that God has abandoned them or that He does not care what they do. His divine Grace always invites their will to choose the right.

2061. While some people accept the guidance of the divine Grace, others so surrender themselves to Evil that it must necessarily follow that Evil obtains a grip over them. They have only to travel through Time or Space to see the end of those who abandoned their lights and surrendered to Evil and Error. For *ḥaqqat* and the meaning of *ḥaqq* in this connection cf. xv. 64.

2062. When once God's Grace is rejected by any one, such a person loses all help and guidance. Such persons are then outside God's Grace, and therefore they are outside guidance.

2063. The strongest oath of the Pagan Arabs would be by the Supreme God: less strong oaths would be by their subordinate deities, or their ancestors, or other things they valued or held sacred.

Raise up those who die: ²⁰⁶⁴
 Nay, but it is a promise
 (Binding) on Him in truth:
 But most among mankind
 Realise it not.

39. (They must be raised up),
 In order that He may manifest
 To them the truth of that
 Wherein they differ, and that
 The rejecters of Truth
 May realise that they had
 Indeed (surrendered to)
 Falsehood. ²⁰⁶⁵

40. For to anything which We
 Have willed, We but say
 The Word, "Be", and it is. ²⁰⁶⁶

SECTION 6.

41. ~~For~~ To those who leave
 Their homes in the cause
 Of God, after suffering
 oppression, — ²⁰⁶⁷
 We will assuredly give
 A goodly home in this world;
 But truly the reward
 Of the Hereafter will be greater.
 If they only realised (this)!

42. (They are) those who persevere
 In patience, and put
 Their trust on their Lord.

يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مَن يَمُوتُ
 بَلَى وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا
 وَلَٰكِن أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

٣٩-لِيُظْهِرَ لَكُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتِ
 يَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهَا
 وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَاذِبِينَ ۝

٤٠-إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ أَن
 نَكُونُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ ۝

٣١-وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ
 مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا
 لَنَكْفِيَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً
 وَلَٰكِن أَجْرُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ
 لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

٣٢-الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

2064. The usual Pagan creed is: 'If there is a God, it does not follow that He will raise us up: why should He?' The answer is twofold: (1) God has promised it, and God's promise is true; (2) He must finally manifest the Truth to them, convict them of their falsehood, and enforce their personal responsibility (xvi. 39).

2065. See the last note.

2066. God's "Word" is in itself the Deed. God's Promise is in itself the Truth. There is no interposition of Time or Condition between His Will and its consequences, for He is the Ultimate Reality. He is independent of the proximate or material causes, for He Himself creates them and establishes their Laws as He pleases.

2067. There is no merit in suffering exile (*hijrat*) in itself. To have any merit, it must be: (1) in the cause of God, and (2) after such an oppression as forces the sufferer to choose between God and man. When these conditions are fulfilled, the exiles are entitled to the highest honour, as having made a great sacrifice in the cause of God. Such were the early Muslim exiles to Abyssinia; such were the later exiles to Medina, before the Apostle himself left his home in Mecca and went to Medina; and such were the exiles who went with the Prophet or followed him. At all these stages, his approval or advice was always obtained, either specifically or generally.

43. And before thee also
The apostles we sent
Were but men,²⁰⁶⁸ to whom
We granted inspiration: if ye
Realise this not, ask of those
Who possess the Message.²⁰⁶⁹

۴۳- وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
إِلَّا بَشَرًا نُوْحِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ فَسَأَلُوا أَهْلَ
الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

44. (We sent them) with Clear Signs
And Books of dark prophecies;²⁰⁷⁰
And We have sent down
Unto thee (also) the Message;
That thou mayest explain clearly
To men what is sent
For them, and that they
May give thought.

۴۴- بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ
وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ
مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ
وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ۝

45. So then those who devise
Evil (plots) feel secure
That God will not cause
The earth to swallow them up,
Or that the Wrath will not
Seize them from directions
They little perceive?—²⁰⁷¹

۴۵- أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ
أَنْ يَخْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ
أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ
مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۝
۴۶- أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ

46. Or that He may not
Call them to account

2068. God's apostles were always men, not angels; and their distinction was the inspiration they received.

2069. If the Pagan Arabs, who were ignorant of religious and other history, wondered how a man from among themselves could receive inspiration and bring a Message from God, let them ask the Jews, who had also received God's Message earlier through Moses, whether Moses was a man, or an angel, or a god. They would learn that Moses was a man like themselves, but inspired by God. "Those who possess the Message" may also mean any men of Wisdom, who were qualified to have an opinion in such matters.

2070. For "Clear Signs" see n. 401 to iii, 62. For *Zubur* (Books of dark prophecies), see iii, 184, and n. 490). As the People of the Book had received "Clear Signs" and inspired Books before, so also God's Message came to the Prophet Muhammad through the Qur-ān, which superseded the earlier revelations, already corrupted in the hands of their followers.

2071. Cf. xvi. 26. The wicked plot against men of God in secret, forgetting that every hidden thought of theirs is known to God, and that for every thought and action of theirs they will have to account to God. And God's punishment can seize them in various ways. Four are enumerated here. (1) They may be swallowed up in the earth like Qārūn, whose story is told in xxviii. 76-81. He was swallowed up in the earth while he was arrogantly exulting on the score of his wealth. (2) It may be that, like Hāmān, the prime minister of Pharaoh, they are plotting against God, when they are themselves overwhelmed by some dreadful calamity: xi. 36-38; xxix. 39-40. The case of Pharaoh is also in point. He was drowned while he was arrogantly hoping to frustrate God's plans for Israel: x. 90-92. For (3) and (4) see the next two notes,

In the midst of their goings²⁰⁷²
To and fro, without a chance
Of their frustrating Him?—

47. Or that He may not
Call them to account
By a process of slow wastage—²⁰⁷³
For thy Lord is indeed
Full of kindness and mercy.

48. Do they not look
At God's creation, (even)
Among (inanimate) things,—²⁰⁷⁴
How their (very) shadows
Turn round, from the right
And the left, prostrating
Themselves to God, and that
In the humblest manner?

49. And to God doth obeisance
All that is in the heavens
And on earth, whether
Moving (living) creatures²⁰⁷⁵
Or the angels: for none
Are arrogant (before their Lord).

فِي ثَقُلِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ۝

۴۷- أَوْ يَأْخُذْهُمْ عَلَى ثَمَرِهِمْ

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

۴۸- أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

يَتَفَقَّهُوا ظِلَّهُ

عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَالْشَّمَائِلِ سُجَّدًا لِلَّهِ

وَهُمْ دَخِرُونَ ۝

۴۹- وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي

الْأَرْضِ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ

وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ۝

2072. (3) Or the punishment may come to people away from their homes and humble them in their pride. It so happened to Abū Jahl, who came exulting in his pride to the Battle of Badr (A.H. 2). His army was three times the size of the Muslim army from Medina. But it suffered a crushing defeat, and he himself was ignominiously slain.

2073. (4) Or, as often happens, the punishment comes slowly and imperceptibly, the power of the enemies of God being wasted gradually, until it is extinguished. This happened to the Meccans during the eight years of the Prophet's exile. The re-conquest of Mecca was bloodless, because the power of the enemy had gradually vanished. The Prophet was thus able to show the unexampled generosity and clemency which he showed on that occasion, for two of God's attributes are expressed in the titles "Full of kindness" (*Ra-ūf*) and "Full of mercy" (*Raḥīm*).

2074. I take "things" here to be inanimate things, for the next verse speaks of living "moving creatures" and angels. By a metaphor even such inanimate things are spoken of as recognising God and humbly worshipping Him. Even their shadows turn round from right and left according to the light from above, and they humbly prostrate themselves on the ground to celebrate the praises of God. The "shadows" suggest how all things in this life are mere shadows of the true Reality in heaven; and they should turn and move in accordance with the divine light, as the shadows of trees and buildings move in one direction or another, and lengthen or shorten according to the light from heaven.

2075. *Moving creatures*, i.e., living creatures. "All that is in the heavens or earth," includes every created thing. And created things are mentioned in three classes: inanimate things, ordinary living things, and angels. Even the highest angels are not arrogant: they bow down and serve their Lord, and so does all Creation.

50. They all revere their Lord,²⁰⁷⁶
High above them, and they do
All that they are commanded.

هـ- يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ
وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

- C. 125.—There is but One God, He Who gives
(xvi. 51—83.) All blessings to man and other creatures.
His greatest gift is that He reveals
Himself. But in many tangible ways
He cares for man and provides for his growth
And sustenance. In rain, and milk,
In fruits and honey, and in Nature and the life
Of man, with his opportunities
Of social, moral, and spiritual growth,
Are Signs for those who understand.
Why then does man show ingratitude
By going after false gods and forgetting God?

SECTION 7.

51. God has said: "Take not
(For worship) two gods:²⁰⁷⁷
For He is just One God:
Then fear Me (and Me alone)."

هـ- وَقَالَ اللَّهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوا لِلْغَيْبِ اثْنَيْنِ
إِلَٰهًا هُوَ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَلْيَأْبَىٰ قَارِهُوْنَ

52. To Him belongs whatever
Is in the heavens and on earth,
And to Him is duty due always:
Then will ye fear other²⁰⁷⁸
Than God?

هـ- وَلَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
وَلَهُ الدِّينُ قَاصِبًا
اَفَعِزَّ اللَّهُ تَعٰلٰى

53. And ye have no good thing
But is from God: and moreover,
When ye are touched by distress,
Unto Him ye cry with groans;²⁰⁷⁹

هـ- وَمَا يَكُم مِّنْ نِّعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ تُمْ
اِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضَّرُّوْلَةُ تَجْكُرُوْنَ

2076. God is so high above the highest of His creatures, that they all look up to him in awe and reverence. And they joyfully do their duty in serving Him. This is the meaning of the "fear of the Lord."

2077. The ancient Persians believed in two powers in the Universe, one good and the other evil. The Pagan Arabs also had pairs of deities: e.g. *Jibt* (Sorcery) and *Tagut* (Evil), referred to in iv. 51, n. 573, or the idols on *Ṣafā* and *Marwa* referred to in n. 160 to ii. 158: their names were *Isāf* and *Nāila*.

2078. The Pagans might have a glimmering of the One True God, but they had also a haunting fear of malevolent Powers of Evil. They are told that such fears are groundless. Evil has no power over those who trust in God: xv. 42. The only fear they should have is that of the Wrath of God. To the righteous all good things come from God, and they have no fear in their hearts.

2079. Which shows that the natural tendency of man is to seek God, the only Power which can truly relieve distress.

54. Yet, when He removes
The distress from you, behold!
Some of you turn to other gods
To join with their Lord—

55. (As if) to show their ingratitude
For the favours We have
Bestowed on them! Then enjoy
(Your brief day); but soon
Will ye know (your folly)!

56. And they (even) assign,
To things they do not know,²⁰⁸⁰
A portion out of that
Which We have bestowed
For their sustenance!²⁰⁸¹
By God, ye shall certainly
Be called to account
For your false inventions.

57. And they assign daughters²⁰⁸²
For God!—Glory be to Him!—
And for themselves (sons,—
The issue) they desire!

58. When news is brought
To one of them, of (the birth
Of) a female (child), his face
Darkens, and he is filled
With inward grief!

59. With shame does he hide
Himself from his people,

٥٧- إِذَا كُفِّتِ الضَّرَّ عَنْكُمْ
إِذَا فَرِحْتُمْ بِكُمْ بَرْتُمْهُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ ۝

٥٥- لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ
فَتَمَتَّعُوا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

٥٦- وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ
تَصْنِيفًا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
ثَالِثًا لَّشَرِّ لِقَاءِ
عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَفْتَرُونَ ۝

٥٧- وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ الْبَنَاتِ سُبْحَانَهُ
وَلَهُمْ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ ۝

٥٨- وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ
ظَلَّتْ وَجْهَهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ۝

٥٩- يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ

2080. Idols and fictitious gods are certainly things of which they have no knowledge, idols being lifeless things of whose life or doings no knowledge is possible, and fictitious gods being but figments of their imagination.

2081. Cf. vi. 136—140, 142—144, and v. 106. The Pagans, in assigning and dedicating some of their children, or some of their cattle, or some of the produce of their fields, to their false gods as sharers with the true Supreme God, made themselves doubly ridiculous; first, because every good thing that they valued was given to them by God, and how could they patronisingly assign to Him a share of His own gifts?—and secondly, because they brought in other gods as sharers, who had no existence whatever! Besides, the cattle and produce was given for their physical sustenance and the children for their social and spiritual sustenance, and how can they, poor creatures, give sustenance to God?

2082. Some of the Pagan Arabs called angels the daughters of God. In their own life they hated to have daughters, as explained in the next two verses. They practised female infanticide. In their state of perpetual war sons were a source of strength to them; daughters only made them subject to humiliating raids!

Because of the bad news
He has had!
Shall he retain it?²⁰⁹³
On (sufferance and) contempt,
Or bury it in the dust?²⁰⁹⁴
Ah! what an evil (choice)
They decide on?²⁰⁹⁵

60. To those who believe not
In the Hereafter, applies
The similitude of evil:
To God applies the highest²⁰⁹⁶
Similitude: for He is
The Exalted in Power,
Full of Wisdom..

SECTION 8.

61. If God were to punish
Men for their wrong-doing,
He would not leave, on the (earth),
A single living creature:
But He gives them respite
For a stated Term:
When their Term expires,
They would not be able
To delay (the punishment)
For a single hour, just as
They would not be able
To anticipate it (for a single
hour).²⁰⁹⁷

مَا يُقَرِّبُهُ
أَتُحْسِنُكَ عَلَى هُونٍ
أَمْ يَكِدُ شَيْءًا فِي الثَّرَابِ
الْأَسَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ○

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ
مِثْلُ السَّوَةِ وَلِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَى
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ○

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ
مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ
وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْذِنُونَ
سَاعَةً وَ
لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُونَ ○

2093. "It," in this and the following clause, refers grammatically to the "news" (*mā bushshira bihi*). In meaning it refers to the "female child"—by the figure of speech known as metonymy.

2094. Cf. lxxx. 8-9. The practice of female infanticide is condemned in scathing terms. Female children used to be buried alive by the Pagan Arabs.

2095. It was an evil choice to decide on. Either alternative—to keep the poor girl as a thing of sufferance and contempt, bringing disgrace on the family, or to get rid of it by burying it alive—was cruel and indefensible.

2096. Cf. xxx. 27. God is above all comparison. But if, for our own understanding, we use any similitudes at all, the highest and noblest would be for God, and the vilest for the Unbelievers, for they deny their own nature. The Pagans reversed this process, and attributed daughters to God, when they considered daughters a sign of shame and ignominy to themselves!

2097. God's decree works without fail. If He were to punish for every wrong or shortcoming, not a single living creature on earth would escape punishment. But in His infinite mercy and forgiveness, He gives respite: He provides time for repentance. If the repentance is forthcoming, God's Mercy is forthcoming without fail. If not, the punishment comes inevitably on the expiry of the Term. The sinner cannot anticipate it by an insolent challenge, nor can he delay it when the time arrives. Let him not think that the respite given him may mean that he can do what he likes, and that he can escape scot-free from the consequences.

62. They attribute to God
What they hate

(for themselves),²⁰⁸⁸

And their tongues assert
The falsehood that all good things²⁰⁸⁹

Are for themselves: without doubt
For them is the Fire, and they
Will be the first to be
Hastened on into it!

٦٢- وَيَسْتَكْبِرُونَ لِلّٰهِ مَا يَكْفُرُونَ
وَصَدَفَتِ السِّتْرَتُهُمُ الْكَذِبَ اَنْ لَهُمُ
الْحُسْنٰى
لَا جَزَاءَ اَنْ لَهُمُ النَّارُ
وَالَهُمْ مُّغْرَضُونَ ٥

63. By God, We (also) sent
(Our apostles) to Peoples
Before thee; but Satan
Made, (to the wicked),
Their own acts seem alluring:
He is also their patron to-day,²⁰⁹⁰
But they shall have
A most grievous penalty..

٦٣- تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا اِلٰى اُمَمٍ
مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ
فَهُوَ وِلِيُّهُمْ الْيَوْمَ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيمٌ ٥

64. And We sent down the Book
To thee for the express purpose,
That thou shouldst make clear
To them those things in which²⁰⁹¹
They differ, and that it should be
A guide and a mercy
To those who believe.

٦٤- وَمَا اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ
اِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ الَّتِي اخْتَلَفُوْا فِيْهَا
وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً
لِّقَوْمٍ يُّزَكُّوْنَ ٥

65. And God sends down rain
From the skies, and gives
Life to the earth after its death:
Verily in this is a Sign

٦٥- وَاللّٰهُ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَآءً فَالْحَيٰتُ
اِلَى الْاَرْضِ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَآيَةً

2088. See above, xvi. 57-58 and notes.

2089. The philosophy of Pleasure (Hedonism) assumes that worldly enjoyment is good in itself and that there is nothing beyond. But it can be shown, even on its own ground, that every act has its inevitable consequences. No Good can spring out of Evil. For falsehood and wrong the agony of the Fire is waiting, and the boastful votaries of Falsehood will be the first to fall into it.

2090. In all ages and among all Peoples God sent His Messengers to teach the Truth and point the way to righteousness. But the allurements of Evil seemed always attractive, and many men preferred their own ways and the ways of their ancestors to the more difficult path of rectitude. This happened again in the time of Muṣṭafā, and will always happen as long as men succumb to Evil.

2091. But the path of duty before God's Messenger is clear. He is sent with the Revelation (the Qur-ān) for three express purposes: (1) that he should bring about unity among the jarring sects, for the Gospel of Unity; while preaching the One True God, leads also to the unity of mankind; (2) that the revelation should be a guide to right conduct; and (3) that it should show the path of repentance and salvation, and thus be the highest mercy to erring sinners.

For those who listen.²⁰⁹²

SECTION 9.

66. And verily in cattle (too)
Will ye find an instructive

Sign.²⁰⁹³

From what is within their

bodies,²⁰⁹⁴

Between excretions and blood,²⁰⁹⁵

We produce, for your drink,

Milk, pure and agreeable

To those who drink it.

67. And from the fruit
Of the date-palm and the vine,
Ye get out wholesome drink²⁰⁹⁶
And food: behold, in this
Also is a Sign
For those who are wise.

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ

٦٦ وَإِنْ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةٌ
لَتُفَعِّلَكُم مِّنْهَا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ مِّمَّنْ يَدْرِي
قُدْرَتَهُ
لَكُمْ خَالِصًا سَائِغًا
لِّلشَّارِبِينَ

٦٧ وَمِنْ ثَمَرِ النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ
تُخَذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرٌ وَرِزْقٌ حَسَنٌ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

2092. When the earth and all its vegetation is well-nigh dead, parched and shrivelled up, a vivifying shower of rain from above gives it new life. This is a Sign or Emblem of spiritual life. When sin well-nigh kills the soul, the fertilising shower of God's Revelation from above puts new life into it.

2093. The spiritual sustenance which God gives is typified by the wonderful ways of sustenance in the physical world, which figure forth God's providence and loving care for His creation. And the wonderful transformations in the physical world, which all tend to the benefit of man, are also Signs of His supreme wisdom. In the previous verse rain was mentioned, which gives new life to dead nature. In this and the following two verses our attention is drawn to milk, the products of the date and the vine, and honey.

2094. *Their*: in the Arabic, it is "its", in the singular number, for two reasons: (1) cattle is the generic plural, and may be treated as a singular noun; (2) the instructive Sign is in cattle collectively, but the milk is the product of each single individual.

2095. Milk is a secretion in the female body, like other secretions, but more specialised. Is it not wonderful that the same food, eaten by males and females, produces in the latter, when they have young, the wholesome and complete food, known as milk? Then, when cattle are tamed and specially bred for milk, the supply of milk is vastly greater than is necessary for their young and lasts for a longer time than during the period they give suck to their young. And it is a wholesome and agreeable diet for man. It is pure, as typified by its whiteness. Yet it is a secretion like other secretions, between the excretions which the body rejects as worthless and the precious blood-stream which circulates within the body and is the symbol of life itself to the animal which produces it.

2096. There are wholesome drinks and foods that can be got out of the date-palm and the vine: e.g., non-alcoholic drinks from the date and the grape, vinegar, date-sugar, grape-sugar, and dates and grapes themselves for eating. If *sakar* must be taken in the sense of fermented wine, it refers to the time before intoxicants were prohibited: this is a Meccan Sūra and the prohibition came in Medina.

68. And thy Lord taught the Bee²⁰⁹⁷
To build its cells in hills,
On trees, and in (men's) habitations;

69. Then to eat of all
The produce (of the earth),²⁰⁹⁸
And find with skill the spacious²⁰⁹⁹
Paths of its Lord: there issues
From within their bodies
A drink of varying colours,
Wherein is healing for men:
Verily in this is a Sign
For those who give thought.

70. It is God Who creates you
And takes your souls at death;
And of you there are
Some who are sent back
To a feeble age, so that²¹⁰⁰
They know nothing after
Having known (much):
For God is All-Knowing,²¹⁰¹
All-Powerful.

٦٨- وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي
مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمَا يَرِثُنَّ

٦٩- ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا
يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَطُونِهِنَّ شَرَابٌ
مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْتَمِدُونَ

٧٠- وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَوَدُّكُمْ
وَيُرِيدُ إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ
لَكِنَّ لَا يَعْلَمُ بَعْدَ عَلِيمٍ سِتْرًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ

2097. *Auḥā*: *wahyus* ordinarily means inspiration, the Message put into the mind or heart by God. Here the Bee's instinct is referred to God's teaching, which it undoubtedly is. In cxix. 5, it is applied to the earth: we shall discuss the precise meaning when we come to that passage. The honey-comb, itself, with its hexagonal cells, geometrically perfect, is a wonderful structure, and is well called *bayūt*, homes. And the way the bee finds out inaccessible places, in the hills, in the trees, and even among the habitations of men, is one of the marvels of nature, i. e., of God's working in His Creation.

2098. The bee assimilates the juice of various kinds of flowers and fruit, and forms within its body the honey which it stores in its cells of wax. The different kinds of food from which it makes its honey give different colours to the honey, e.g., it is dark-brown, light-brown, yellow, white, and so on. The taste and flavour also varies, as in the case of heather honey, the honey formed from scented flowers, and so on. As food it is sweet and wholesome, and it is used in medicine. Note that while the instinctive individual acts are described in the singular number, the produce of "their bodies" is described in the plural, as the result of their collective effort.

2099. *Ḥululan*: two meanings are possible: (1) ways easy and spacious, referring to the unerring way in which bees find their way from long distances to their combs; and (2) the idea of humility and obedience in them. From both we can derive a metaphorical and spiritual meaning.

2100. Besides the mystery and beauty of the many processes going on in the working of God's Creation, there is the wonderful life of man himself on this earth: how he is created as a child; how he grows in intelligence and knowledge; and how his soul is taken back and his body suffers dissolution. In some cases he lives so long that he falls into a feeble old age like a second childhood: he forgets what he learnt and seems almost to go back in Time. Is not all this wonderful, and evidence of the knowledge and Power of God?

2101. Our attention having been called to the remarkable transformations in life and nature, by which the knowledge and Power of God work out His beneficent Plan for His creatures, we are reminded that man at best is but a feeble creature, but for the grace of God. We then pass on in the next Section to the differences in the gifts which men themselves enjoy, distinguishing them into so many categories. How much greater is the difference between the created things and their Creator?

SECTION 10.

71. God has bestowed His gifts
Of sustenance more freely on some
Of you than on others: those
More favoured are not going
To throw back their gifts
To those whom their right hands
Possess, so as to be equal
In that respect. Will they then
Deny the favours of God? ²¹⁰²

١٠-وَاللّٰهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فِي
الرِّزْقِ فَمَا الَّذِينَ فُضِّلُوا بِرَادِّي رِزْقِهِمْ
عَلَىٰ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ
فَهُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ
أَلَيْسَ لِمَنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ ٱللَّهَ يَجْعَدُونَ ۝

72. And God has made for you
Mates (and Companions) of your
own nature, ²¹⁰³
And made for you, out of them,
Sons and daughters and
grandchildren, ²¹⁰⁴
And provided for you sustenance
Of the best: will they
Then believe in vain things,
And be ungrateful for God's
favours?—

١١-وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدًا
وَذَرَكُمْ فِي أَهْلِ بِلَادِكُمْ
أَقْبَا الْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ
وَيَنْعَمَتِ ٱللَّهُ هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ ۝

73. And worship others than God,—
Such as have no power
Of providing them, for
sustenance, ²¹⁰⁵

١٢-وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ ٱللَّهِ
مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقًا

2102. Even in the little differences in gifts, which men enjoy from God, men with superior gifts are not going to abandon them so as to be equal with men of inferior gifts, whom, perhaps, they hold in subjection. They will never deny their own superiority. How then (as the argument is pursued in the two following verses), can they ignore the immense difference between the Creator and created things, and make the latter, in their thoughts, partners with God?

2103. *Of your nature*: or of yourselves. Cf. iv. 1 and n. 504. Self, or Personality, or Soul, all imply a bundle of attributes, capacities, predilections, and dispositions, which we may sum up in the word *Nafs*, or nature. Woman was made to be (1) a mate or companion for man; (2) except for sex, of the same nature as man, and therefore, with the same moral and religious rights and duties; and (3) she is not to be considered a source of all evil or sin, as the Christian monks characterised her, but rather as a blessing, one of the favours (*Ni'mat*) of God.

2104. *Hafadat*: collective plural, daughters, grandchildren, and descendants. The root *hafada*, also implies obedient service and ministrations. Just as the sons (first mentioned) should be a source of strength, so daughters and grandchildren should serve and contribute to the happiness of fathers and grandparents, and are to be looked upon as further blessings.

2105. "Sustenance" (*rizq*) in all this passage (xvi. 65-74), as elsewhere, implies all that is necessary for man's life and growth, physical, mental, moral, and spiritual. Milk, fruit, and honey are examples of physical gifts, with a metaphorical reference to mental and moral health; family life is an example of moral and social and (ultimately) spiritual opportunities in the life of man; and in xvi. 65 is an example of rain in the physical world as a type of God's revelation in the spiritual world.

- With anything in heavens or earth,
And cannot possibly have
Such power?

74. Invent not similitudes²¹⁰⁶
For God: for God knoweth,
And ye know not.

75. God sets forth the Parable
(Of two men: one) a slave
Under the dominion of
another;²¹⁰⁷
He has no power of any sort;
And (the other) a man
On whom We have bestowed
Goodly favours from Ourselves,
And he spends thereof (freely),
Privately and publicly:
Are the two equal?
(By no means;)
Praise be to God. But
Most of them understand not.

76. God sets forth (another) Parable
Of two men: one of them
Dumb, with no power
Of any sort; a wearisome burden
Is he to his master;
Whichever way he directs him,
He brings no good:²¹⁰⁸
Is such a man equal
With one who commands

مِنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ شَيْئًا
وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ

فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

هـ. ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا
مَنْبُوكًا لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ
وَمَنْ زَكَّرْنَاهُ مَثَارِيفًا حَسَنًا
فَهُوَ يَنْفِقُ مِنْهُ يَرْثِي وَجْهًا
هَلْ يَسْتَوُونَ
أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

هـ. وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا وَجُلَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا
أَبْكُمُ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلَى
مَوْلَاهُ
أَيْنَمَا يُوَجِّههُ لَا يَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ
هَلْ يَسْتَوِي هُوَ وَمَنْ يَأْمُرُ

2106. Cf. xvi. 60 above, and n. 2086. One instance of false similitudes is where Pagans say their gods are mere types or symbols or where men pray to men as Intercessors.

2107. The first parable is of two men, one of whom is a slave completely under the dominion of another, with no powers of any sort, and another a free man, who is gifted in every way, and is most generous in bestowing out of his opulent wealth (material as well as intangible), privately and publicly, without let or hindrance; for he is his own master and owes no account to any one. The first is like the imaginary gods which men set up,—whether powers of nature, which have no independent existence but are manifestations of God, or deified heroes or men, who can do nothing of their own authority but are subject to the Will and Power of God; the second describes in a faint way the position of God, the Self-Subsistent, to Whom belongs the dominion of all that is in heaven and earth, and Who bestows freely of His gifts on all His creatures.

2108. In the second Parable, one man is dumb; he can explain nothing, and he can certainly do nothing; he is only a wearisome burden to his master, no matter what his master asks him to do; or perhaps he is really harmful instead of bringing any good; such are idols (literal and metaphorical) when taken as false gods. The other man is in a position to command, and he commands what is just and righteous; not only his commands but his doings also are on the path of righteousness. Such are the qualities of God.

Justice, and is on
A Straight Way? ²¹⁰⁹

SECTION 11.

77. **To God belongeth the**
Mystery ²¹¹⁰

Of the heavens and the earth.
And the Decision of the Hour ²¹¹¹
(Of Judgment) is as
The twinkling of an eye,
Or even quicker:
For God hath power
Over all things.

78. It is He Who brought you
Forth from the wombs
Of your mothers when
Ye knew nothing; and He
Gave you hearing and sight
And intelligence and affections: ²¹¹²
That ye may give thanks
(To God).

79. Do they not look at
The birds, held poised
In the midst of (the air
And) the sky? Nothing
Holds them up but (the power ²¹¹³
Of) God. Verily in this
Are Signs for those who believe.

بِالْعَدْلِ وَهُوَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۝

۞ وَاللَّهُ غَفُوبٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝
وَمَا أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ إِلَّا كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ
أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ ۝
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝

۞ وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ
أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا ۝
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ۝

۞ أَلَمْ يَرْزُقْنَا إِلَى الظَّيْرِ مُسْعِرَاتٍ فِي جَوِّ
السَّمَاءِ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۝
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝

2109. The gist of the argument is that those who deviate from the worship of the true God commit twofold treason. (1) They do not recognise the immense difference between the Creator and created things, although, in their own little selfish lives, they are tenacious of any little differences there may be between themselves and other fellow-creatures not so gifted. (2) They are guilty of gross ingratitude in forgetting that the source of all goodness and power is God, to Whom alone they owe all the gifts they enjoy in life.

2110. The key to all things—not only those which we see and understand, but those which we do not see or of which we have no idea—is with God, Whose knowledge and power are supreme.

2111. We must not imagine the Day (or Hour or Moment) of Judgment like a prolonged trial in an open court. It is independent of Time. Even "the twinkling of an eye" is not an adequate figure of speech.

2112. Literally, 'hearts,' which are considered the centres of the affections, and in Arabic idiom, of intelligence also. We should therefore give thanks to God, not to imaginary deities or powers or forces.

2113. All the wonderful things in creation are due to the artistry, power, and wisdom of God. Such is the flight of birds in mid-air. So also are the inventions and discoveries, due to man's intelligence, in the next verse; for man's intelligence is a gift direct from God.

80. It is God Who made your
habitations

Homes of rest and quiet²¹¹⁴
For you; and made for you,
Out of the skins of animals,
(Tents for) dwellings, which
Ye find so light (and handy)
When ye travel and when
Ye stop (in your travels);²¹¹⁵
And out of their wool,
And their soft fibres²¹¹⁶
(Between wool and hair),
And their hair, rich stuff
And articles of convenience
(To serve you) for a time.²¹¹⁷

۝۸۰- وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا
وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ جُلُودِ الْاَنْعَامِ
بُيُوتًا تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ
وَيَوْمَ اِقَامَتِكُمْ
وَمِنْ اَصْوَابِهَا وَاَوْبَارِهَا
وَاَشْعَارُهَا اَنَّا نَابَا
وَمَتَاعًا اِلٰى حِينٍ ۝

81. It is God Who made,
Out of the things He created,
Some things to give you shade;²¹¹⁸
Of the hills He made some
For your shelter; He made you
Garments to protect you
From heat, and coats of mail
To protect you from
Your (mutual) violence.²¹¹⁹
Thus does He complete
His favours on you, that
Ye may bow to His Will²¹²⁰
(In Islam).

۝۸۱- وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَ
ظِلَالًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَ الْجِبَالِ
الْاَنْدَادَ وَجَعَلَ لَكُم سَرَابِیْلَ
تَقِيْكُمْ الْحَرَّ
وَسَرَابِیْلَ تَقِيْكُمْ بِاسْمِكُمْ كَذٰلِكَ يُتِمُّ
رَحْمَتُهٗ عَلَیْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْلِمُوْنَ ۝

2114. Man's social, intellectual, and spiritual gifts make, of his permanent dwellings, homes of rest and quiet, of refinement and the purer affections, which are the types, in this earthly life, of the highest spiritual Good, the love of God. The pure Home thus becomes the type of the highest spiritual Destiny of man. And these capacities in man are the gifts of God

2115. When man travels, he wants temporary dwellings, tents, which he can make of the skins of animals, or of the fabrics of vegetable fibres, similar to the skins of animals. These tents are easy to carry when moving, and easy to pitch during halts.

2116. *Şa'r*, wool, is what we get from sheep. *Sha'r*, hair, is what we get from goats or similar animals, for weaving into fabrics. *Wabar* is the soft camel's hair of which, also, fabrics are woven: they may be considered intermediate between the other two: by extension and analogy the term may be applied to furs and such things, by way of illustration.

2117. All such articles of refined luxury, and useful articles of comfort and convenience only last for a while, but they must be considered as God's gifts.

2118. For example, trees, gardens, the roofs of houses; also from another point of view, the fact that the sun's rays at various times and in various parts of the earth, come obliquely, thus causing shadow along with sunshine. In the hills there are caves and grottoes.

2119. Our clothes protect us from heat and cold, just as our armour protects us from the hurt which we might otherwise receive in battle.

2120. All these blessings, which have both a physical and (by promoting the good of man) a spiritual purpose, should teach us to rally to God and tune our will with His Universal Will, which is another name for Islam.

82. But if they turn away,
Thy duty is only to preach
The Clear Message.

83. They recognise the favours²¹²¹
Of God; then they deny them;
And most of them
Are (creatures) ungrateful.

۸۲- فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا
فَأَنسَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاءَ الْمُسِينُ ○
۸۳- يَعْزِفُونَ نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ فَهُمْ يُكْفِرُونَهَا
وَكَثُرَهُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ○

C. 126.—God's apostles, if rejected, will be witnesses
(xvi. 84-100.) Against those who reject God's Truth!
And all false gods will disappear.
A life of justice and righteousness is enjoined
By God, and the strictest fidelity, in intent
And action. For God will judge us
By our faith and deeds, and no evil
Shall have power over those who believe
And put their trust in God their Lord.

SECTION 12.

84. One Day We shall raise
From all Peoples a Witness:²¹²²
Then will no excuse be accepted
From Unbelievers, nor will they
Receive any favours.

85. When the wrong-doers
(Actually) see the Penalty,²¹²³
Then will it in no way
Be mitigated, nor will they
Then receive respite.

86. When those who gave partners
To God will see their "partners",

۸۴- وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا
ثُمَّ لَا يُوْذَنُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَلَا هُمْ
يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ○

۸۵- وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ
فَلَا يَخَفُوا عَنْهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يُنْظَرُونَ ○

۸۶- وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا شُرَكَاءَهُمْ

2121. 'Arafa is distinguished from 'alima in implying a specific discernment (or recognition) of various qualities and uses. All mankind recognises the value of the blessings they enjoy, but in forgetting or disobeying their Author, the wicked show gross ingratitude; for in practice they deny their obligation to Him for those blessings.

2122. To each People is sent God's Messenger or Teacher, to point out the right way. There may be one, or there may be many. Such a Messenger (Rasūl) will be a witness that God's Truth was preached to all peoples in express terms, in addition to the Signs of God everywhere in nature. There will then be no room for excuses of any kind. Those who rejected God after repeated warnings cannot reasonably ask for more respite, as they have had every kind of respite during their life of probation; nor can they now take refuge behind God's Grace, which they had repeatedly rejected.

2123. When the terrible Penalty is actually on them, it is too late for repentance and for asking for Mercy. Justice must take its course.

They will say: "Our Lord!
These are our 'partners,' those
Whom we used to invoke²¹²⁴
Besides Thee." But they will
Throw back their word at them
And say: "Indeed ye are liars!"

87. That day shall they (openly)
show²¹²⁵
(Their) submission to God; and all
Their inventions shall leave
Them in the lurch.

88. Those who reject God
And hinder (men) from the Path
Of God—for them
Will We add Penalty
To Penalty; for that they
Used to spread mischief.

39. One day We shall raise
From all Peoples a witness
Against them, from amongst
themselves:²¹²⁶
And We shall bring thee
As a witness against these
(Thy people): and We have sent
down
To thee the Book explaining
All things, a Guide, a Mercy,
And Glad Tidings to Muslims.

SECTION 13.

90. God commands justice, the doing
Of good, and liberality to kith

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ شُرَكَائُنَا الَّذِينَ
كُنَّا نَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِكَ
قَالَ الْقَوْمُ الْيَوْمَ إِنَّكُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ۝

۞ وَالْقَوْمَ إِلَى اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ السَّلَامُ
وَصَلَّى عَلَيْهِمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ۝

۞ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ زُذِلْنَاهُمْ عَذَابًا
فَوْقَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يُفْسِدُونَ ۝

۞ يَوْمَ تَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا
عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ
وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ۝

۹۰- إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَ

2124. The worshippers of false gods will try to shift the responsibility from their own shoulders to that of the false gods. They will suggest (though they will not have the courage for such a bare-faced lie) that they were misled by the false gods. But their lying suggestion will be contradicted and thrown back at them as explained in the next note.

2125. In so far as the false gods were real things, such as deified men or forces of nature, they will openly disclaim them and then (as always) show their submission to God. In so far as the false gods were the inventions of the fancy of the idolaters, they will leave their worshippers in the lurch, for they will be shown as non-existent.

2126. To the thought expressed in xvi. 84 above, is added another detail here. Not only will there be witnesses from Peoples, but the witnesses will be men from amongst the Peoples themselves, men of their own kith and kin, who understood them and explained God's Message in their own language. The Apostle Muhammad will be witness against the Arabs who rejected him. For those who believe in him (of all races and peoples), the Book which he brought will be an Explanation, a Guide, a Mercy, and a Gospel.

And kin, and He forbids
All shameful deeds, and injustice
And rebellion: He instructs you,
That ye may receive admonition.²¹²⁷

91. Fulfil the Covenant of God
When ye have entered into it,
And break not your oaths
After ye have confirmed them;
Indeed ye have made²¹²⁸
God your surety; for God
Knoweth all that ye do.
92. And be not like a woman
Who breaks into untwisted strands
The yarn which she has spun,
After it has become strong.²¹²⁹
Nor²¹³⁰ take your oaths to practise
Deception between yourselves,
Lest one party should be
More numerous than another:²¹³¹
For God will test you by this;
And on the Day of Judgment

إِنَّمَا هِيَ ذِي الْقُرُونِ وَيَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ
وَالْمُنكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ○

۱-وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ
وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا
وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ○

۹۲-وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِي نَقَضَتْ
عَزْلَهَا مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ أَنْكَاثًا
تَتَّخِذُونَ أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ
أَنْ تَكُونَ أُمَّةٌ هِيَ أَرْبَى مِنْ أُخْتِهِ
إِنَّمَا يَنْبَلُوهُمُ اللَّهُ بِهِ وَلِيَبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ

2127. Justice is a comprehensive term, and may include all the virtues of cold philosophy. But religion asks for something warmer and more human, the doing of good deeds even where perhaps they are not strictly demanded by justice, such as returning good for ill; or obliging those who in worldly language "have no claim" on you; and of course *à fortiori* the fulfilling of the claims of those whose claims are recognised in social life. Similarly the opposites are to be avoided: everything that is recognised as shameful, and everything that is really unjust, and any inward rebellion against God's Law of our own conscience in its most sensitive form.

2128. The immediate reference may or may not be to the oath of fidelity to the Prophet taken at 'Aqaba fourteen months before the Hijra and repeated a little later: see v. 8, and n. 705. But the general meaning is much wider. And this may be viewed in two aspects (1) Every oath taken, or covenant made, is a Covenant before God, and should be faithfully observed. In this it approaches in meaning to v. 1. (2) In particular, every Muslim makes, by the profession of his Faith, a Covenant with God, and he confirms that Covenant every time he repeats that profession. He should therefore faithfully observe the duties taught to him by Islam.

2129. The Covenant which binds us in the spiritual world makes us strong, like strands of fluffy cotton spun into a strong thread. It also gives us a sense of security against much evil in this world. It costs a woman much labour and skill to spin good strong yarn. She would be foolish indeed, after she has spun such yarn, to untwist its constituent strands and break them into flimsy pieces.

2130. *Nor*: I construe *lattaḥḥizūna* with *lā taḥūnū* in the previous clause.

2131. Do not make your religion merely a game of making your own party numerically strong by alliances cemented by oaths, which you readily break when a more numerous party offers you its alliance. The Quraish were addicted to this vice, and in international politics at the present day, this seems to be almost a standard of national self-respect and international skill. Islam teaches nobler ethics for individuals and nations. A Covenant should be looked upon as a solemn thing, not to be entered into except with the sincerest intention of carrying it out; and it is binding even if large numbers are ranged against it.

He will certainly make clear
To you (the truth of) that
Wherein ye disagree.²¹³²

93. If God so willed, He
 Could make you all one People :
 But He leaves straying²¹³
 Whom He pleases, and He guides
 Whom He pleases : but ye
 Shall certainly be called to account
 For all your actions.

94. And take not your oaths,
To practise deception between
 yourselves,²¹³⁴
With the result that some one's foot
May slip after it was
Firmly planted, and ye may
Have to taste the evil
 (consequences)
Of having hindered (men)
From the Path of God,
And a mighty Wrath
Descend on you.

95. **Do** not sell the Covenant of God
For a miserable price: ²¹³⁵
For with God is (a prize)
Far better for you,
If ye only knew.

الْقِيَمَةُ
مَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ○
٩٣- وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً
وَلَكِنْ يَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَكُنْتُمْ لَكِنَ
عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ○
٩٤- وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ
دَحْلًا بَيْنَكُمْ
فَتَرَكُ قَدْرٌ بَعْدَ ثُبُوتِهَا
وَتَذُوقُوا السُّوءَ
بِمَا صَدَقْتُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَلَكُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ○
٩٥- وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
إِنَّمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ○

2132. Disagreements need not necessarily cause conflict where the parties are sincere and honest and do not wish to take advantage of one another. In such cases they do not go by numbers, groupings, and alliances, but by just conduct as in the sight of God. Honest differences will be removed when all things are made clear in the Hereafter.

2133. Cf. xiv. 4 and n 1875. God's Will and Plan, in allowing limited free-will to man, is not to force man's will, but to give all guidance, and leave alone those who reject that guidance, in case they should repent and come back into Grace. But in all cases, in so far as we are given the choice, we shall be called to account for all our actions. "Leaving to stray" does not mean that we can do what we please. Our personal responsibility remains.

2134. In xvi. 92 above, the motive for false and fraudulent covenants was pointed out with reprobation. Now are pointed out the consequences, viz., (1) to others; if they had not been deceived, they might have walked firmly on the Path, but now they lose faith and perhaps commit like frauds for which you will be responsible; (2) to yourselves; you have not only gone wrong yourselves; but have set others on the wrong path; and you deserve a double Penalty. Perhaps the "evil consequences" refer to this world, and the "Wrath" to the Hereafter.

2135. Any possible gain that you can make by breaking your Covenant and thus breaking God's Law must necessarily be miserable; while your own benefit is far greater in obeying God's Will and doing right.

96. What is with you must vanish :
What is with God will endure.
And We will certainly bestow,
On those who patiently persevere,
Their reward according to
The best of their actions.²¹³⁶
97. Whoever works righteousness,
Man or woman, and has Faith,—
Verily, to him will We give
A new Life, a life²¹³⁷
That is good and pure, and We
Will bestow on such their reward
According to the best²¹³⁸
Of their actions.
98. ~~When~~ When thou dost read²¹³⁹
The Qur-ān, seek God's protection
From Satan the Rejected One.
99. No authority has he over those
Who believe and put their trust
In their Lord.
100. His authority is over those
Only, who take him as patron
And who join partners with God.
- ٩٦- مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا
أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ○
- ٩٧- مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنثَىٰ
وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ
مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ○
- ٩٨- فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ
مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ○
- ٩٩- إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطٰنٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ○
- ١٠٠- إِنَّمَا سُلْطٰنُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ ○

C. 127.—God's Truth may come in stages, but it gives
(xvi. 101-128.) Strength, guidance, and glad tidings, and should
Be held fast when once received. Be not
Like those who get puffed up in pride

2136. What comparison can there possibly be between spiritual Good which will endure for ever, and any temporal advantage which you may snatch in this world, which will fade and vanish in no time? And then, God's generosity is unbounded. He rewards you, not according to your merits, but according to the very best of your actions.

2137. Faith, if sincere, means right conduct. When these two confirm each other, God's grace transforms our life. Instead of being troubled and worried, we have peace and contentment; instead of being assailed at every turn by false alarms and the assaults of evil, we enjoy calm and attain purity. The transformation is visible in this life itself, but the "reward" in terms of the Hereafter will be far beyond our deserts.

2138. The same ending as in the previous verse has the same effect as rhyme or a refrain in poetry, or the repetition of a leading *motif* in music. The argument is completed and rounded off.

2139. Evil has no authority or influence on those who put their trust in God. It is good to express that trust in outward actions and a formal expression of it—as in the formula, "I seek God's protection from Evil"—helps us. Reading or reciting the Qur-ān should be understood both literally and figuratively, as the symbol of the earnest desire of the soul to know and understand God's Will and act in accordance therewith. Man is weak at best, and he should seek strength for his will in God's help and protection.

With worldly good, and scorn the Truth.
 Enjoy the good things of life, but render
 Thanks to God and obey His Law.
 Be true in faith, and proclaim His Word
 With gentle, patient wisdom : for God
 Is with those who live in self-restraint
 A pure, good, and righteous Life.

SECTION 14.

101. ~~When~~ When We substitute one
 revelation²¹⁴⁰
 For another,—and God knows best
 What He reveals (in stages),—
 They say, "Thou art but a
 forger":
 But most of them understand not.

١٠١- وَإِذَا بَدَلْنَا آيَةً مَكَانَ آيَةٍ وَاللَّهُ
 أَعْلَمُ
 بِمَا يُفَكِّرُونَ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُفَكِّرٌ
 بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ○

102. Say, the Holy Spirit²¹⁴¹ has
 brought
 The revelation from thy Lord
 In Truth, in order to strengthen
 Those who believe,²¹⁴² and as a
 Guide
 And Glad Tidings to Muslims.

١٠٢- قُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوحُ الْقُدُسِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
 بِالْحَقِّ لِيُثَبِّتَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهُدًى
 وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ○

103. We know indeed that they
 Say, "It is a man that
 Teaches him." The tongue
 Of him they wickedly point to
 Is notably foreign, while this
 Is Arabic, pure and clear.²¹⁴³

١٠٣- وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا
 يُعَلِّمُهُ الْبَشَرُ لِسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجِبُ
 وَهَذَا الْبَشَرُ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ ○

2140. See ii. 106, and n. 107. The doctrine of progressive revelation from age to age and time to time does not mean that God's fundamental Law changes. It is not fair to charge a man of God with forgery because the Message as revealed to him is in a different form from that revealed before, when the core of the Truth is the same, for it comes from God.

2141. The title of the Angel Gabriel, through whom the revelations came down.

2142 The People of the Book, if they had true faith, were themselves strengthened in their faith and cleared of their doubts and difficulties by the revelations brought by Muḥṭafā; and all—whether People of the Book or not—who came within the fold of Islam, found the Qu-rān a Guide and a Gospel, i.e., a substitute for the Mosaic Law and for the Christian Gospel, which had both been corrupted.

2143. The wicked attribute to men of God just such motives and springs of action as they themselves would be guilty of in such circumstances. The Pagans and those who were hostile to the revelation of God in Islam could not and cannot understand how such wonderful words could flow from the tongue of the Holy Prophet. They must needs postulate some human teacher. Unfortunately for their postulate, any possible human teacher they could think of would be poor in Arabic speech if he had all the knowledge that the Qu-rān reveals of previous revelations. Apart from that, even the most eloquent Arab could not, and cannot, produce anything of the eloquence, width, and depth of Quranic teaching, as is evident from every verse of the Book.

104. Those who believe not
In the Signs of God,—
God will not guide them,
And theirs will be
A grievous Penalty.
105. It is those who believe not
In the Signs of God,
That forge falsehood:
It is they who lie!²¹⁴⁴
106. Any one who, after accepting
Faith in God, utters
Unbelief,—²¹⁴⁵
Except under compulsion,
His heart remaining firm
In Faith—but such as
Open their breast to Unbelief,—
On them is Wrath from God,
And theirs will be
A dreadful Penalty.
107. This because they love
The life of this world
Better than the Hereafter:
And God will not guide
Those who reject Faith.
108. Those are they whose hearts,
Ears, and eyes God has sealed
up,²¹⁴⁶
And they take no heed.
109. Without doubt, in the Hereafter
They will perish.

۱۰۶- مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِيْمَانِهٖ
اِلَّا مِنْۢ اَكْرَهٗ وَّقُلُوْبُهُمْ مُّطْمَئِنِّنٌۢ بِالْاِيْمَانِ

2144. It is clearly those who raise the cry of forgery that are guilty of falsehood, as there is not the least basis or even plausibility in their suggestion.

2145. The exception refers to a case like that of 'Ammār, whose father Yāsir and mother Sumayya, were subjected to unspeakable tortures for their belief in Islam, but never recanted. 'Ammār himself was of less mature age and faith, and in a weak moment, suffering under tortures himself and his mind acted on by the sufferings of his parents, uttered a word construed as recantation, though his heart never wavered and he came back at once to the Prophet, who consoled him for his pain and confirmed his faith. There is no permission in this for weakness or dissembling under torture or persecution.

2146. Cf. ii. 7. On account of their iniquities and their want of Faith their hearts and their senses become impervious to God's grace, and they run headlong to perdition.

110. But verily thy Lord,—
To those who leave their homes
After trials and persecutions,—²¹⁴⁷
And who thereafter strive
And fight for the Faith
And patiently persevere,—
Thy Lord, after all this
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

SECTION 15.

111. **One** Day every soul
Will come up struggling ²¹⁴⁸
For itself, and every soul
Will be recompensed (fully)
For all its actions, and none
Will be unjustly dealt with.
112. God sets forth a Parable:
A city enjoying security ²¹⁴⁹
And quiet, abundantly supplied
With sustenance from every
place:
Yet was it ungrateful
For the favours of God:
So God made it taste
Of hunger and terror in extremes
(Closing in on it) like a
garment ²¹⁵⁰
(From every side), because

١١٠- ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا
مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ
مِمَّا قَبْلُ مَا قَاتَبُوا
ثُمَّ جَاهَدُوا وَاصْبَرُوا
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَعَفُوٌّ رَحِيمٌ ۝

١١١- يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِجُثْلِهَا
وَتُؤْتَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ
وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ۝

١١٢- وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً
كَانَتْ آمِنَةً
مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِنْ كُلِّ
مَكَانٍ
فَكَثُرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ
فَآذَاهَا اللَّهُ بِأَسَافٍ
الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ

2147. I take this verse to refer to such men as were originally with the Pagans but afterwards joined Islam, suffered hardships and exile, and fought and struggled in the Cause, with patience and constancy. Their past would be blotted out and forgiven. Men like Khalid ibn Walid were numbered with the foremost heroes of Islam. In that case this verse would be a Medina verse, though the Sūra as a whole is Meccan. Perhaps it would be better to read, with some Commentators, *fatana* in the active voice rather than *futina* in the passive voice, and translate "after inflicting trials and persecutions (on Muslims)." Notice the parallelism in construction between this verse and verse 119 below.

2148. When the Reckoning comes, each soul will stand on its own personal responsibility. No one else can help it. Full justice will be done, and all the seeming inequalities of this world will be redressed.

2149. The reference may be to any of the cities or populations in ancient or modern times, which were favoured with security and other blessings from God, but which rebelled from God's Law and tasted the inevitable penalty, even in the midst of their iniquities. Some Commentators see here a reference to the city of Mecca under Pagan control. See next note.

2150. There is a double metaphor: (1) the *tasting* of hunger and terror after the abundant supplies and the full security which it had enjoyed; and (2) the complete *enfolding* of the City as with a *garment*, by these two scourges, hunger and a state of subjective alarm. If the reference is to Mecca shortly before its fall to the Muslims, the "hunger" was the seven years' severe famine which afflicted it, and the alarm was the constant fear in the minds of the Pagans that their day was done. Peace and prosperity were restored after the re-entry of the Apostle.

117. (In such falsehood)
Is but a paltry profit;
But they will have
A most grievous Penalty.

١١٧- مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝

118. ~~But~~ To the Jews We prohibited
Such things as We have
Mentioned to thee before: ²¹⁵⁴
We did them no wrong,
But they were used to
Doing wrong to themselves.

١١٨- وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَزَمْنَا
مَا فَعَصَيْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَا ظَنَنَاهُمْ
وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ۝

119. But verily thy Lord,—
To those who do wrong
In ignorance, but who
Thereafter repent and make
amends,—
Thy Lord, after all this,
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most
Merciful. ²¹⁵⁵

١١٩- ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا الشُّوْءَ
بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا
لَعَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

SECTION 16.

120. Abraham was indeed a
model, ²¹⁵⁶
Devoutly obedient to God,
(And) true in faith, and he
Joined not gods with God: ²¹⁵⁷

١٢٠- إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ
حَنِيفًا ۚ وَلَوْ رَكَبُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۝

121. He showed his gratitude
For the favours of God,
Who chose him, and guided him
To a Straight Way.

١٢١- شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعُمِهِ
اجْتَبَاهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۝

122. And We gave him Good
In this world, and he will be,

١٢٢- وَأَتَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ۚ وَإِنَّهُ

2154. See vi. 146 and n. The further prohibitions to them were a punishment for their hardness of hearts, and not a favour.

2155. See above, xvi. 110, and n. 2147. The parallelism in construction confirms the suggestion of the alternative reading which is made in that note. The similarity of expressions also rounds off the argument, as by a refrain in poetry. What follows now in this Sūra is an exhortation to right conduct.

2156. *Ummat*: a model, pattern, example for imitation: but the idea that he was an *Ummat* in himself, standing alone against his world, should not be lost sight of. See next note.

2157. The Gospel of Unity has been the corner-stone of spiritual Truth for all time. In this respect Abraham is the model and fountain-head for the world of western Asia and its spiritual descendants all over the world. Abraham was among a people (the Chaldeans) who worshipped stars and had forsaken the Gospel of Unity. He was among them but not of them. He suffered persecution, and left his home and his people, and settled in the land of Canaan.

In the Hereafter, in the ranks
Of the Righteous.²¹⁵⁸

123. So We have taught thee
The inspired (message),
"Follow the ways of Abraham
The True in Faith, and he
Joined not gods with God".
124. The Sabbath was only made²¹⁵⁹
(Strict) for those who disagreed
(As to its observance);
But God will judge between them
On the Day of Judgment,
As to their differences.²¹⁶⁰
125. Invite (all) to the Way
Of thy Lord with wisdom
And beautiful preaching;
And argue with them
In ways that are best
And most gracious;²¹⁶¹
For thy Lord knoweth best,
Who have strayed from His Path,

فِي الْآخِرَةِ لِمَنِ الصَّالِحِينَ ۝

۱۲۳ ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ
أَنِ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۝

۱۲۴ إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا
فِيهِ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَعْلَمُ بَيْنَهُم يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ
فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۝

۱۲۵ ادْعُهُمْ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ
وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ
وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ

2158. Cf. ii. 130.

2159. If Abraham's Way was the right way, the Jews were ready with the taunt, "Why don't you then observe the Sabbath?" The answer is twofold. (1) The Sabbath has nothing to do with Abraham. It was instituted with the Law of Moses because of Israel's hardness of heart (ii. 74); for they constantly disputed with their Prophet Moses (ii. 108), and there were constantly among them afterwards men who broke the Sabbath (ii. 65, and n. 79). (2) Which was the true Sabbath Day? The Jews observe Saturday. The Christians, who include the Old Testament in their inspired Scripture, observe Sunday, and a sect among them (the Seventh Day Adventists) disagree, and observe Saturday. So there is disagreement among the People of the Book. Let them dispute among themselves. Their dispute will not be settled till the Day of Judgment. Meanwhile, Muslims are emancipated from such stringent restrictions. For them there is certainly the Day of United Prayer on Friday, but it is in no sense like the Jewish or the Scotch Sabbath!

2160. Cf. ii. 113.

2161. In this wonderful passage are laid down principles of religious teaching, which are good for all time. But where are the Teachers with such qualifications? We must invite all to the Way of God, and expound His Universal Will; we must do it with wisdom and discretion, meeting people on their own ground and convincing them with illustrations from their own knowledge and experience, which may be very narrow, or very wide. Our preaching must be, not dogmatic, not self-regarding, not offensive, but gentle, considerate, and such as would attract their attention. Our manner and our arguments should not be acrimonious, but modelled on the most courteous and the most gracious example, so that the hearer may say to himself, "This man is not dealing merely with dialectics; he is not trying to get a rise out of me; he is sincerely expounding the faith that is in him, and his motive is the love of man and the love of God."

And who receive guidance.²¹⁶²

126. And if ye do catch them out,
Catch them out no worse
Than they catch you out:
But if ye show patience,
That is indeed the best (course)²¹⁶³
For those who are patient.

127. And do thou be patient,²¹⁶⁴
For thy patience is but
From God; nor grieve over them:
And distress not thyself
Because of their plots.

128. For God is with those²¹⁶⁵
¹⁴ Who restrain themselves,
³⁰ And those who do good.

وَهُوَ أَخْلَمُ بِالْمُنْتَدِينَ
۱۲۶- وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا
بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ
وَلَكِنْ صَبِّرْتُمْ لَكُمْ فَخْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ

۱۲۷- وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ
إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا تَكُنْ فِي ضَلٰلٍ مِّمَّا يَتَّبِعُونَ

۱۲۸- إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ ۝

2162. It may be that the Preacher sometimes says to himself "What is the use of teaching these people? they have made up their minds, or they are obstinate, or they are only trying to catch me out." Let him not yield to such a thought. Who knows how the seed of the Word of God may germinate in people's minds? It is not for man to look for results. Man's inner thoughts are known best to God.

2163. In the context this passage refers to controversies and discussions, but the words are wide enough to cover all human struggles, disputes, and fights. In strictest equity you are not entitled to give a worse blow than is given to you. But those who have reached a higher spiritual standard do not even do that. They restrain themselves, and are patient. Lest you should think that such patience only gives an advantage to the adversary, you are told that the contrary is the case: the advantage is with the patient, the self-possessed, those who do not lose their temper or forget their own principles of conduct.

2164. In the previous verse are laid down the principles of conduct in controversy for all Muslims: 'if you catch them out, you are not entitled to strike a heavier blow than you received, but it is better to restrain yourself and be patient.' There patience was recommended. In this verse a command is directly addressed to the Prophet, 'Do thou be patient.' It is a command: his standard as the Great Teacher is much higher: and he carried it out in his life. His patience and self-restraint were under circumstances of extraordinary provocation. In his human wisdom it may sometimes have seemed questionable whether forbearance and self-restraint might not be human weaknesses: he had to defend his people as well as himself against the enemy's persecutions. He is told here that he need not entertain any such fears. Patience (with constancy) in those circumstances was in accordance with God's own command. Nor was he to grieve if they rejected God's Message; the Prophet had done his duty when he boldly and openly proclaimed it. Nor was his heart to be troubled if they hatched secret plots against himself and his people. God would protect them.

2165. And the Sûra ends with the highest consolation which the righteous can receive: the assurance that God is with them. A double qualification is indicated for so high an honour,—(1) that they should not yield to human passion or anger or impatience, and (2) that they should go on with constancy doing good all around them. To attain to the Presence of God in the sense of "I am with you" is the culmination of the righteous man's aspiration.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA XVII (*Bani Isrā'īl*).

In the gradation of spiritual teaching (see Introduction to Sūra viii), we saw that the first seven Sūras sketched the early spiritual history of man, and led up to the formation of the new Ummat of Islam. Sūras viii to xvi formed another series dealing with the formation of the new Ummat and its consolidation, and God's dealing with man taken as an Ummat and considered in his social relations in organised communities (see Introductions to Suras viii, x, and xvi). We now come to a fresh series, (Sūras xvii-xxix), which may be considered in three parts. Sūras xvii-xxi begin with an allusion to the *Mi'rāj* (of which more later), and proceed to spiritual history as touching individuals rather than nations. The old prophets and stories of the past are now referred to from this point of view. Sūras xxii-xxv refer to Hajj (pilgrimage), worship and prayer, chastity, privacy, etc., as related to a man's individual spiritual growth. Sūras xxvi-xxix go back to the old prophets and stories of the past, as illustrating the growth of the individual soul in its reactions against the lives of the communities, and the reactions of the communities to the lives of its great individual souls.

Let us now consider S. xvii. by itself. It opens with the mystic Vision of the Ascension of the Holy Prophet: he was transported from the Sacred Mosque (of Mecca) to the Farthest Mosque (of Jerusalem) in a night and shown some of the Signs of God. The majority of Commentators take this Night Journey literally, but allow that there were other occasions on which a spiritual Journey or Vision occurred. Even on the supposition of a miraculous bodily Journey, it is conceded that the body was almost transformed into a spiritual fineness. The *Hadīth* literature gives details of this Journey and its study helps to elucidate its mystic meaning. The holy Prophet was first transported to the seat of the earlier revelations in Jerusalem, and then taken through the seven heavens, even to the Sublime Throne, and initiated into the spiritual mysteries of the human soul struggling in Space and Time. The Spaniard, Miguel Asin, Arabic Professor in the University of Madrid, has shown that this *Mi'rāj* literature had a great influence on the Mediæval literature of Europe, and especially on the great Italian poem, the *Divine Comedy* (or Drama) of Dante, which towers like a landmark in mediæval European literature.

The reference to this great mystic story of the *Mi'rāj* is a fitting prelude to the journey of the human soul in its spiritual growth in life. The first steps in such growth must be through moral conduct—the reciprocal rights of parents and children, kindness to our fellow-men, courage and firmness in the hour of danger, a sense of personal responsibility, and a sense of God's Presence through prayer and praise.

The *Mi'rāj* is usually dated to the 27th night of the month of Rajab (though other dates, e.g., 17th of Rabī' I, are also given) in the year before the Hijra. This fixes the date of the opening verse of the Sūra, though portions of the Sūra may have been a little earlier.

Summary

The spiritual experiences of the men of God are given in order that God's Signs may be made clear to men: man is misled into evil, and must be guided to a sense of personal responsibility (xvii. 1-22, and C. 128).

Our service to God is shown also in our human relations, goodness to parents and kinsmen and strangers in want, as well as kindness to children, purity in sex relations, justice and respect for human life, protection of orphans, probity in all dealings, and avoidance of arrogance (xvii. 23-40 and C. 129).

God's glory is above all comparison, and the reception of His revelation marks off the man of faith from those who do not believe. But the Believers should speak fair and avoid dissensions, for God doth encompass all men (xvii. 41-60, and C. 130).

Pride caused the fall of Iblis, but the children of Adam have been raised in excellence above other Creation. They will be judged by their deeds. Prayer is good at stated times and at night, and the Qur-ān is offered as healing and mercy (xvii. 61-84, and C. 131).

Inspiration (the Qur-ān) is a Sign of God's grace, and men should accept it without making carping excuses. Be humble in prayer and praise (xvii. 85-111, and C. 132).

C. 128.—It is the privilege of the men of God
(xvii. 1-22.) To see the sublimest mysteries
Of the spiritual world and instruct men
In Righteousness; they warn and shield men
Against Evil. But nothing can lessen
Each soul's personal responsibility
For its own deeds. It carries its fate
Round its own neck. God's gifts
Are for all, but not all receive
The same gifts, nor are all gifts
Of equal dignity or excellence.

Sūra XVII.

Bani Isra-ʾil, or the Children of Israel.

*In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. **Glory to (God)**
Who did take His Servant
For a Journey by night ²¹⁶⁶
From the Sacred Mosque ²¹⁶⁷
To the Farthest Mosque, ²¹⁶⁸
Whose precincts We did
Bless,—in order that We
Might show him some
Of Our Signs: for He
Is the One Who heareth
And seeth (all things). ²¹⁶⁹
2. We gave Moses the Book, ²¹⁷⁰
And made it a Guide

۱- سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ
لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا
الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ
مِنَ الْبَيْتِ
إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ
۲- وَآتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى

2166. The reference is to the *Mī'rāj*, for which see the Introduction to this Sūra.

2167. *Masjid* is a place of prayer: here it refers to the Ka'ba at Mecca. It had not yet been cleared of its idols and rededicated exclusively to the One True God. It was symbolical of the new Message which was being given to mankind.

2168. *The Farthest Mosque* must refer to the site of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem on the hill of Moriah, at or near which stands the Dome of the Rock, called also the Mosque of *Badhrat 'Umar*. This and the Mosque known as the Farthest Mosque (*Masjid-ul-Aqsā*) were completed by the Amir 'Abd-ul-Malik in A.H. 68. *Farthest*, because it was the place of worship farthest west which was known to the Arabs in the time of the holy Prophet: it was a sacred place to both Jews and Christians, but the Christians then had the upper hand, as it was included in the Byzantine (Roman) Empire, which maintained a Patriarch at Jerusalem. The chief dates in connection with the Temple are: it was finished by Solomon about B.C. 1004; destroyed by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar about 586 B.C.; rebuilt under Ezra and Nehemiah about 515 B.C.; turned into a heathen idol-temple by one of Alexander's successors, Antiochus Epiphanes, 167 B.C.; restored by Herod, B.C. 17 to A.D. 29; and completely razed to the ground by the Emperor Titus in A.D. 70. These ups and downs are among the greater Signs in religious history.

2169. God's knowledge comprehends all things, without any curtain of Time or any separation of Space. He can therefore see and hear all things, and the *Mī'rāj* was a reflection of this knowledge without Time or Space.

In this and the subsequent verses, the reference to God is generally in the first person and plural. But in the first and the last clause of this verse it is in the third person singular: "Glory to God, Who did take His Servant....."; "He is the One.....". In each of these two instances, the clause expresses the point of view of God's creatures, who glorify Him, and whose hearing and seeing are ordinarily so limited that they can do nothing but glorify Him when one of His creatures is raised up to hear and see the Mysteries. It is *they* who glorify Him.

2170. *The Book*: the revelation that was given to Moses. It was there clearly laid down that those who followed Moses must consider God as all-in-all. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me; thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.....; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.....;" etc. (Exod xx. 3-5). These are the words of the English Bible. As a matter of fact the spirit of the Mosaic teaching went further. It referred all things to the Providence of God: God is the Disposer of all affairs, and we are to look to none but Him. This is Islam, and the *Mī'rāj* showed that it was the teaching of God from the most ancient times, and yet it was violated by the very people who claimed to be its custodians.

To the Children of Israel,
(Commanding): "Take not
Other than Me ²¹⁷¹
As Disposer of (your) affairs."

يَهْيَ إِسْرَائِيلَ أَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا
مِنْ دُونِي وَكِيلًا ۝

3. Oh ye that are sprung
From those whom we carried
(In the Ark) with Noah! ²¹⁷²
Verily he was a devotee
Most grateful.

۝ ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا ۝

4. And We gave (clear) warning
To the Children of Israel ²¹⁷³
In the Book, that twice ²¹⁷⁴
Would they do mischief
On the earth and be elated
With mighty arrogance
(And twice would they be punished)!

۝ وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
فِي الْكِتَابِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ
وَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا ۝

5. When the first of the warnings
Came to pass, We sent
Against you Our servants
Given to terrible warfare: ²¹⁷⁵
They entered the very inmost
Parts of your homes;
And it was a warning
(Completely) fulfilled.

۝ وَإِذَا آجَاءُ وَعْدُ أُولَاهُمَا بَعَثْنَا
عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا أَنَا أُولَىٰ بِأَبْصَارِنَا
فَتَأْسُوا لِحُلُلِ الدِّيَارِ
وَكَانَ وَعْدُ امْفِعُولَا ۝

2171. Note the transition from "We" in the first clause to "Me" in the second clause. The first clause refers to the majesty of God as the Heavenly King; the second clause refers to His personal interest in all our affairs.

2172. After the Deluge of the time of Noah the only descendants of Noah were those who were saved in the Ark with him. They had special reason to celebrate the praises of God. But they relapsed into idolatry, sin, and abominations. They are reminded of the true and sincere devotion of Noah himself, as contrasted with the unworthiness of Noah's descendants, especially the Children of Israel.

2173. The Book is the revelation given to the Children of Israel. Here it seems to refer to the burning words of Prophets like Isaiah. For example, see Isaiah, chap. xxiv or Isaiah v. 20-30, or Isaiah iii. 16-26.

2174. What are the two occasions referred to? It may be that "twice" is a figure of speech for "more than once", "often". Or it may be that the two occasions refer to (1) the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., when the Jews were carried off into captivity, and (2) the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70, after which the Temple was never re-built. See n. 2168 above. On both occasions it was a judgment of God for the sins of the Jews, their back-slidings and their arrogance.

2175. A good description of the war-like Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonians. They were servants of God in the sense that they were instruments through which the wrath of God was poured out on the Jews, for they penetrated through their lands, their Temple, and their homes, and carried away the Jews, men and women, into captivity. As regards "the daughters of Zion" see the scathing condemnation in Isaiah, iii. 16-26.

6. Then did We grant you
The Return as against them : ²¹⁷⁶
We gave you increase
In resources and sons,
And made you
The more numerous
In man-power.

٦- ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَأَمَدَدْنَكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ
وَجَعَلْنَكُمْ أَكْثَرَ تَفْئِيدًا ○

7. If ye did well,
Ye did well for yourselves ;
If ye did evil,
(Ye did it) against yourselves. ²¹⁷⁷
So when the second
Of the warnings came to pass,
(We permitted your enemies)
To disfigure your faces, ²¹⁷⁸
And to enter your Temple ²¹⁷⁹
As they had entered it before,
And to visit with destruction
All that fell into their power. ²¹⁸⁰

٧- إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ
وَلِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا
فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ
لِيُؤْثِرُوا بِجُوهِكُمْ
وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ
وَلِيُتَبَرِّكُوا مَا عَمَلُوا بِنَهْيِهِ ○

8. It may be that your Lord
May (yet) show Mercy ²¹⁸¹

٨- عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يَرْحَمَكُمْ

2176. The return of the Jews from the Captivity was about 520 B.C. They started life afresh. They rebuilt their Temple. They carried out various reforms and built up a new Judaism in connection with Ezra. See appendix II following S. v. For a time they prospered. Meanwhile their old oppressors the Babylonians had been absorbed by Persia. Subsequently Persia was absorbed in Alexander's Empire. The whole of western Asia was Hellenized, and the new school of Jews was Hellenized also, and had a strong centre in Alexandria. But their footing in Palestine continued, and under the Asmonæan Dynasty (B. C. 167-63), they had a national revival, and the names of the Macca-bees are remembered as those of heroes. Another dynasty, that of the Idumæans, (B.C. 63 to B.C. 4), to which Herod belonged, also enjoyed some semi-independent power. The sceptre of Syria (including Palestine) passed to the Romans in B. C. 63 and Jewish feudatory Kings held power under them. But the Jews again showed a stiff-necked resistance to God's Messenger in the time of Jesus, and the inevitable doom followed in the complete and final destruction of the Temple under Titus in 70 A.D.

2177. This is a parenthetical sentence. If anyone follows God's Law, the benefit goes to himself : he does not bestow a favour on anyone else. Similarly evil brings its own recompense on the doer of evil.

2178. The second doom was due to the rejection of the Message of Jesus. "To disfigure your faces" means to destroy any credit, or power you may have got : the face shows the personality of the man.

2179. Titus's destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was complete. He was a son of the Roman Emperor Vespasian, and at the date of the destruction of Jerusalem, had the title of Cæsar as heir to throne. He ruled as Roman Emperor from 79 to 81 A.D.

2180. Merivale in his *Romans Under the Empire* gives a graphic account of the siege and final destruction (ed. 1890, vii. 221-255). The population of Jerusalem was then 200,000. According to the Latin historian Tacitus it was as much as 600,000. There was a famine and there were massacres. There was much fanaticism. The judgment of Merivale is : "They" (the Jews) "were judicially abandoned to their own passions and the punishment which naturally awaited them" (vii. 221).

2181. Now we come to the time of our holy Prophet. In spite of all the past, the Jews could still have obtained God's forgiveness if they had not obstinately rejected the greatest of the Prophets also. If they were to continue in their sins, God's punishment would also continue to visit them.

Unto you; but if ye
Revert (to your sins),
We shall revert
(To Our punishments):
And We have made Hell
A prison for those who
Reject (all Faith).²¹⁸²

وَلَنْ عُدْتُمْ عَنْهَا
وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ حَصِيرًا ٥

قَدْ لَا تَدْرِي

9. Verily this Qur-ān
Doth guide to that
Which is most right (or stable),²¹⁸³
And giveth the glad tidings
To the Believers who work
Deeds of righteousness,
That they shall have
A magnificent reward;

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّذِي
هُوَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ
أَن لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا ٥

10. And to those who believe not
In the Hereafter, (it announceth)
That We have prepared
For them a Penalty
Grievous (indeed).

وَالَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ
أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ٦

SECTION 2.

11. The prayer that man
Should make for good,
He maketh for evil;²¹⁸⁴
For man is given to
Hasty (deeds).

أَوَيْدَى الْإِنْسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ دُعَاهُ بِالْخَيْرِ
وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا ٧

12. We have made the Night
And the Day as two²¹⁸⁵

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ آيَتَيْنِ ٨

2182. There is such a thing as disgrace in this life, but the final disgrace is in the Hereafter, and that will be irretrievable.

Notice that the allegorical reference to Jewish history, when brought into relation with the mystic meaning of Mi'rāj, refers to the constant struggle of the individual soul against evil. It has its setbacks and its punishments. But if it is true to itself and is true to the Faith in God, God will give it strength and make it successful in its fight against evil. For God's Mercy is unbounded and comes to suffering humanity again and again.

2183. The instability and crookedness of the Jewish soul having been mentioned, the healing balm which should have cured it is now pointed out. The Message of the Qur-ān is for all. Those who have Faith and show that Faith in their conduct must reap their spiritual reward. But those who reject Faith cannot escape punishment. Apart from what is past, apart from questions of national or racial history, there is a spiritual Hope—and a spiritual Danger—for every soul.

2184. Man in his ignorance or haste mistakes evil for good, and desires what he should not have. The wise and instructed soul has patience and does not put its own desires above the wisdom of God. He receives with contentment the favours of God, and prays to be rightly guided in his desires and petitions.

2185. If we were to cry when it is night, we shall look foolish when it is day; for the night is but a preparation for the day: perhaps, as the last verse says, we pray for the day when we want rest for the night. Both are Signs from God. Darkness and light stand for ignorance and knowledge. "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." Darkness and light may also stand for shadow and sunshine, sorrow and joy; both may be necessary for our development.

(Of Our) Signs : the Sign
Of the Night have We obscured,
While the Sign of the Day
We have made to enlighten
You; that ye may seek
Bounty from your Lord,²¹⁸⁶
And that ye may know
The number and count
Of the years : all things
Have We explained in detail.

كَمَوْنًا آيَةَ الْيَلِّ
وَجَعَلْنَا آيَةَ الْنَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً
لِتَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
وَلِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابِ
وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَضَّلْنَاهُ تَفْصِيلًا

13. Every man's fate²¹⁸⁷
We have fastened
On his own neck :
On the Day of Judgment
We shall bring out
For him a scroll,
Which he will see
Spread open.²¹⁸⁸

۱۳- وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ
طَلْعَهُ فِي غَنْوَةٍ
وَنُخْرِجُهُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا
يَلْقَاهُ مَنْشُورًا

14. (It will be said to him :)
"Read thine (own) record :
Sufficient is thy soul
This day to make out
An account against thee."²¹⁸⁹

۱۴- اقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ
كُفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا

2186. By the physical light we see physical facts. And this physical gift of God is good for us in two ways: (1) we can arrange for our livelihood, or we can attain the knowledge of the physical sciences and gain some control over the physical forces of nature; and (2) the daily rising and setting of the sun gives us the computation of days and years, for the physical natural year is the solar year. But there is a spiritual light even more precious: by it we can similarly attain two objects, *viz.*: (1) our spiritual livelihood and knowledge, and (2) our computation of the stages we reach in our spiritual years. Let us be patient and seek everything as from God,—in joy and in sorrow, in knowledge and in want of knowledge of those things which are above us. Let us rejoice in what God has given us, and not be impatient about those things which He in His wisdom has thought fit to withhold from us. But all things should be sought and striven for under the guidance of the All-Knowing God.

2187. *Fate*: *Tā'ir*, literally a bird, hence an omen, an evil omen, fate. Cf. xxxvi. 19. The Arabs, like the ancient Romans, sought to read the mysteries of human fate from the flight of birds. And many of us in our own day seek to read our future fortunes by similar superstitions. We read in the previous verse that there are Signs of God, but they are not meant to subserve the vulgar purpose of disclosing our future destiny in a worldly sense. They are meant for quite other purposes, as we have explained. Our real fate does not depend upon birds or omens or stars. It depends on our deeds, good or evil, and they hang round our necks. Man is the maker of his own fortune.

2188. These deeds, good or evil, will be embodied in a scroll which will be quite open to us in the light of the Day of Judgment, however much we may affect to be ignorant of it now or waste our energies in prying into mysteries that do not concern us.

2189. Our true accusers are our own deeds. Why not look to them instead of vainly prying into something superstitious which we call a book of fortune or a book of omens?

15. ~~Who~~ ho receiveth guidance,
 Receiveth it for his own
 Benefit : who goeth astray
 Doth so to his own loss : ²¹⁹⁰
 No bearer of burdens
 Can bear the burden ²¹⁹¹
 Of another : nor would We
 Visit with Our Wrath
 Until We had sent
 An apostle (to give warning).

16. When We decide to destroy
 A population, We (first) send
 A definite order to those
 Among them who are given
 The good things of this life ²¹⁹²
 And yet transgress; so that
 The word is proved true ²¹⁹³
 Against them : then (it is)
 We destroy them utterly.

17. How many generations
 Have We destroyed after
 Noah ? ²¹⁹⁴
 And enough is thy Lord
 To note and see
 The sins of His servants. ²¹⁹⁵

١٥- مَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ
 وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا
 وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ
 وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ
 حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا ۝

١٦- وَإِذَا أَرَدْنَا أَن نُهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً
 مِّنْهُمْ إِنَّا فَعَلْنَا فِيهَا
 فِتْنَةً عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ
 فَنَدْمُنْهُمْ تَدْمِينًا ۝

١٧- وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِن بَعْدِ
 نُوحٍ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ بِذُنُوبِ عِبَادِهِ
 خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا ۝

2190. The doctrine of personal responsibility is insisted on, and the basis of ethics is shown to be our own good or evil as furthering or obstructing our highest development.

2191. The doctrine of vicarious atonement is condemned. Salvation for the wicked cannot be attained by the punishment of the innocent. One man cannot bear the burden of another: that would be unjust. Every man must bear his own personal responsibility. But God never visits His wrath on anyone until due warning is conveyed to him through an accredited apostle.

2192. God's Mercy gives every chance to the wicked to repent. When wickedness gets so rampant that punishment becomes inevitable, even then God's Mercy and Justice act together. Those who are highly gifted from God—it may be with wealth or position, or it may be with talents and opportunities—are expected to understand and obey. They are given a definite order and warning. If they still transgress there is no further room for argument. They cannot plead that they were ignorant. The command of the Lord is proved against them, and its application is called for beyond doubt. Then it is that their punishment is completed.

2193. *Qaul* here has the sense of word, order, law, charge framed against one under a definite law.

2194. Noah's Flood is taken as a new starting point in history. But even after that hundreds of empires, towns, and generations have perished for their wickedness.

2195. Let not the wicked think, because they are given a lease of life and luxury for a time, that their wickedness has escaped notice. God notes and sees all things, both open and secret. He knows the hidden motives and thoughts of men, and He has no need of any other evidence. His knowledge and sight are all-sufficient.

18. ~~See~~ any do wish
For the transitory things
(Of this life), We readily²¹⁹⁶
Grant them—such things
As We will, to such persons
As We will: in the end
Have We provided Hell
For them: they will burn
Therein, disgraced and rejected.²¹⁹⁷

۱۸- مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ
فَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُ لِنَمُنُّهُ
ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ
يُصَلُّهَا مِنْ مُوْمِنًا مَذْخُورًا ○

19. Those who do wish
For the (things of) the
Hereafter,²¹⁹⁸
And strive therefor
With all due striving,
And have Faith,—²¹⁹⁹
They are the ones
Whose striving is acceptable
(To God).

۱۹- وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ
وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا
وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا ○

20. Of the bounties of thy Lord
We bestow freely on all—
These as well as those:
The bounties of thy Lord
Are not closed (to anyone).²²⁰⁰

۲۰- كُلًّا نُمِدُّ هَؤُلَاءِ وَهَؤُلَاءِ مِنْ عَطَا
رَبِّكَ
وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاؤُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا ○

21. See how We have bestowed
More on some than on others;
But verily the Hereafter
Is more in rank and gradation

۲۱- أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ
وَلِِّلْآخِرَةِ الْكِبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ

2196. An explanation is now given of how it is that prosperity sometimes seems to attend the wicked. The explanation is threefold: (1) the transitory things of this life are worth little in the eternal scheme of things; (2) even they are provided, not just because their recipients wish for them, but according to a definite Plan of God; and (3) in the end there is for the wicked the eternal Misery and deprivation of grace,—the Hell which is worse than destruction in the terms of this world.

2197. All the pride and insolence will then be brought low. The disgrace and the exclusion from the "sight of the Face of God" will by themselves be punishments of which the magnitude cannot be measured in the terms of our present material life.

2198. This is in contrast to the last verse. Those who wish for mere earthly good sometimes get it and misuse it. Those whose eyes are fixed on the Hereafter, they too share in their Lord's bounty provided they fulfil the conditions explained in the next note; but their wishes and endeavours are more acceptable in the sight of God.

2199. A mere wish for moral and spiritual good is not enough. It must be backed up by hard endeavour and supported by a lively Faith. On those conditions the wishes are accepted by God.

2200. God's favours are showered on all,—the just and the unjust, the deserving and the undeserving. But there is a difference as explained in the last two verses.

And more in excellence.²²⁰¹

22. Take not with God
Another object of worship;²²⁰²
Or thou (O man!) wilt sit
In disgrace and destitution.²²⁰³

وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا ٥
لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ
تَتَعَبَّدَ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِهِ ٥

C. 129.—To be worthy of the service of the One True God,
(xvii. 23-40.) We must love and serve His Creatures.

The parents who cherished us in childhood
Deserve our humble reverence and service: next
Come the rights of kinsmen, those in want,
And wayfaring strangers: to each
According to his need, not in spendthrift show.
And gentleness is needed to those whom we
Cannot help. God will provide. He has made
Life sacred and pure. Fulfil your trusts
For orphans and deal with all in strictest
Probity. Pry not into evil from curiosity,
And shun insolence: for God hates evil,—
The One, the Good, the Universal Lord!

SECTION 3.

23. Why Lord hath decreed
That ye worship none but Him,
And that ye be kind
To parents. Whether one
Or both of them attain
Old age in thy life,²²⁰⁴
Say not to them a word
Of contempt, nor repel them,
But address them
In terms of honour.

٢٣- وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدَ إِلَّا إِلَهًا
وَالْوَالدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا
إِنَّمَا يَبْغُ عَنْكَ الْكِبَرُ أَحَدُهُمَا
أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا آيٌ وَلَا تُنْهَرُهُمَا
وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ٥

2201. Nor should man suppose that all gifts are of equal value. The spiritual ones rank far higher in dignity and real worth than the transitory ones. Therefore it is altogether wrong to compare the worldly prosperity of a wicked man with the apparent want of it to a man of spiritual worth. There is no comparison between them when measured by right standards.

2202. The seeming inequality of gifts to men might make short-sighted men impugn the impartiality of God. But the fault lies with such men's own want of knowledge and want of Faith. There is no excuse for them to seek other objects of worship than God. For there is none worthy of worship except God.

2203. If foolish men turn to false objects of worship, they will not only be disappointed, but they will lose the respect of their own fellow-men, and spiritually they will be reduced to destitution. All their talents and their works will be of no avail.

2204. The spiritual and moral duties are now brought into juxtaposition. We are to worship none but God, because none but God is worthy of worship, not because "the Lord thy God is a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me" (Exod. xx. 5).

Note that the act of worship may be collective as well as individual; hence the plural *ta'badu*. The kindness to parents is an individual act of piety; hence the singular *taqul*, *qui*, etc.

24. And, out of kindness,
Lower to them the wing ²²⁰⁵
Of humility, and say:
"My Lord! bestow on them
Thy Mercy even as they
Cherished me in childhood." ²²⁰⁶

٢٤- وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذِّلِّ مِنَ
الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا
كَمَا رَكَّبَيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا

25. Your Lord knoweth best
What is in your hearts:
If ye do deeds of righteousness,
Verily He is Most Forgiving
To those who turn to Him
Again and again
(in true penitence). ²²⁰⁷

٢٥- رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ صِلَا حِينَ
وَأَنْتُمْ كَانُوا لِلْآثَامِينَ عَافُونَ

26. And render to the kindred
Their due rights, as (also)
To those in want,
And to the wayfarer: ²²⁰⁸
But squander not (your wealth)
In the manner of a spendthrift. ²²⁰⁹

٢٦- وَأَتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَى حَقَّهُ
وَالْيَسِيرِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ
وَلَا تَبْذُرْ تَبْذِيرًا

2205. Cf. xv. 88 and n. 2011. The metaphor is that of a high-flying bird which lowers her wing, out of tenderness to her offspring. There is a double aptness. (1) When the parent was strong and the child was helpless, parental affection was showered on the child: when the child grows up and is strong, and the parent is helpless, can he do less than bestow similar tender care on the parent? (2) But more: he must approach the matter with gentle humility; for does not parental love remind him of the great love with which God cherishes His creatures? There is something here more than simple human gratitude: it goes up into the highest spiritual region.

2206. Note that we are asked to honour our father and mother, not "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exod. xx. 12), but upon much higher and more universal grounds, such as befit a perfected revelation. In the first place, not merely respect, but cherishing kindness, and humility to parents, are commanded. In the second place, this command is bracketed with the command to worship the One True God: parental love should be to us a type of divine love: nothing that we can do can ever really compensate for that which we have received. In the third place (see next verse) our spiritual advancement is tested by this: we cannot expect God's forgiveness if we are rude or unkind to those who unselfishly brought us up.

2207. It is the heart, and its hidden and secret motives, by which we are judged: for God knows them all.

2208. In the Jewish Decalogue, which was given to a primitive and hard-hearted people, this refinement of kindness,—to those in want and to wayfarers (i.e. total strangers whom you come across) finds no place. Nor was there much danger of their wasting their substance out of exuberance. Even the command "to honour thy father and mother" comes after the ceremonial observance of the Sabbath. With us, the worship of God is linked up with kindness—to parents, kindred, those in want, those who are far from their homes though they may be total strangers to us. It is not mere verbal kindness. They have certain rights which must be fulfilled.

2209. All charity, kindness, and help are conditioned by our own resources. There is no merit if we merely spend out of bravado or for idle show. How many families are ruined by extravagant expenses at weddings, funerals, etc., or (as they may call it) to "oblige friends or relatives", or to give to able-bodied beggars? To no one was this command more necessary than to Muslims of the present day.

27. Verily spendthrifts are brothers
Of the Evil Ones;
And the Evil One
Is to his Lord (Himself)
Ungrateful.²²¹⁰

٢٧- إِنَّ الشَّيْءَ يَرِيْنَ كَأَنَّهُ الْغَوَانُ الشَّيْطَانُ
وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا ۝

28. And even if thou hast
To turn away from them
In pursuit of the Mercy
From thy Lord which thou
Dost expect, yet speak
To them a word
Of easy kindness.²²¹¹

٢٨- وَلَمَّا تَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ
ابْتَغَاءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا
فَقُلْ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَيْسُورًا ۝

29. Make not thy hand tied²²¹²
(Like a niggard's) to thy neck,
Nor stretch it forth
To its utmost reach,
So that thou become
Blameworthy and destitute.

٢٩- وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ
وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ
فَتَكُونَ مَلُومًا مَحْسُورًا ۝

30. Verily thy Lord doth provide
Sustenance in abundance
For whom He pleaseth, and He
Provideth in a just measure.²²¹³
For He doth know
And regard all His servants.

٣٠- إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ
لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا ۝

2210. Spendthrifts are not merely fools. They are of the same family as the Evil Ones. And the chief of the Evil Ones (notice the transition from the plural to the singular)—Satan himself—fell by his ingratitude to God. So those who misuse or squander God's gifts are also ungrateful to God.

2211. You may have to "turn away" from people for two reasons. (1) You may not have the wherewithal with which to entertain them and give them their rights; or (2) you may have to give them a wide berth because their thoughts are not as your thoughts. In either case there is no need to speak harshly to them. Your words should be those of "easy kindness", i.e., the sort of kindness (not merely frigid politeness) which flows from pity and understanding and smooths over unnecessary difficulties in human intercourse.

2212. Cf. the phrase for niggardliness in v. 67. We are not to be so lavish as to make ourselves destitute and incur the just censure of wise men, nor is it becoming to keep back our resources from the just needs of those who have a right to our help. Even strangers have such a right, as we saw in xvii. 26 above. But we must keep a just measure between our capacity and other people's needs.

2213. If a foolish spendthrift pretends that his generosity, even if it ruins himself, is good for other people, he is reminded that God will take care of all. He knows every one's true needs and cares for them. He gives in abundance to some, but in all cases He gives in just measure. Who are we to pretend to greater generosity? A foolish Hindi saying was current in Oudh: *jis ko nā de Maulā, us ko de Āqaf-ud-daula*: "To those to whom the Lord gives not, Āqaf-ud-daula gives".

It was extravagance that ruined his family and wiped his kingdom of Oudh off the map.

SECTION 4.

31. Kill not your children
- ²²¹⁴

For fear of want: We shall
Provide sustenance for them
As well as for you.
Verily the killing of them
Is a great sin.

32. Nor come nigh to adultery:
-
- For it is a shameful (deed)
-
- And an evil, opening the road
- ²²¹⁵
-
- (To other evils).

33. Nor take life—which God
-
- Has made sacred—except
-
- For just cause. And if
-
- Anyone is slain wrongfully,
-
- We have given his heir
-
- Authority (to demand Qiṣāṣ
- ²²¹⁶
-
- Or to forgive): but let him
-
- Not exceed bounds in the matter
-
- Of taking life; for he
-
- Is helped (by the Law).

34. Come not nigh
-
- To the orphan's property
-
- Except to improve it,
- ²²¹⁷

۳۱- وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ
نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ
إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطَاً كَبِيراً ○

۳۲- وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّوْجَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً
وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ○

۳۳- وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ
إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا
فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوَلِيِّهِ سُلْطَانًا
فَلَا يُبْرِئُ فِي الْقَتْلِ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا ○

۳۴- وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي
هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

2214. The Arabs were addicted to female infanticide. In a society perpetually at war a son was a source of strength whereas a daughter was a source of weakness. Even now infanticide is not unknown in other countries for economic reasons. This crime against children's lives is here characterised as one of the greatest of sins.

2215. Literally, "it is evil as a road (or a way)". Adultery is not only shameful in itself and inconsistent with any self-respect or respect for others, but it opens the road to many evils. It destroys the basis of the family; it works against the interests of children born or to be born; it may cause murders and feuds and loss of reputation and property, and also loosen permanently the bonds of society. Not only should it be avoided as a sin, but any approach or temptation to it should be avoided.

2216. On the subject of Qiṣāṣ see ii, 178 and the notes thereto. Under the strict limitations there laid down, a life may be taken for a life. The heir is given the right to demand the life; but he must not exceed due bounds, because he is helped by the Law. Some Commentators understand "he" in "he is helped (by the Law)" to refer to the heir of the person against whom Qiṣāṣ is sought. He too will be helped by the Law, if the heir of the first slain exceeds the bounds of Law.

2217. Cf. vi. 152, and other passages relating to orphans, e.g., ii. 220. If an orphan's property is touched at all, it should be to improve it, or to give him something better than he had before,—never to take a personal advantage for the benefit of the guardian. A bargain that may be quite fair as between two independent persons would be, under this verse, unfair as between a guardian and his orphan ward until the latter attains the full age of understanding.

Until he attains the age²²¹⁸
Of full strength ; and fulfil
(Every)²²¹⁹ engagement,
For (every) engagement
Will be enquired into
(On the Day of Reckoning).²²²⁰

حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ
وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ
إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُورًا ۝

35. Give full measure when ye
Measure, and weigh
With a balance that is straight :
That is the most fitting
And the most advantageous
In the final determination.²²²¹

وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ إِذَا كِلْتُمْ
وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطِ أَسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ
ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ۝

36. And pursue not that
Of which thou hast²²²²
No knowledge ; for
Every act of hearing,
Or of seeing,
Or of (feeling in) the heart
Will be enquired into
(On the Day of Reckoning).

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ
إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ
وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ
أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُورًا ۝

37. Nor walk on the earth²²²³
With insolence : for thou

وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّكَ

2218. *Ashuddun* means the age when the orphan reaches his full maturity of strength and understanding, say between the ages of 18 and 30. The age of legal majority may be 18 (as for certain purposes in India) or 21 (as in England). For certain purposes in Muslim law it may be less than 18. In the orphan's interest a much stricter standard is required in his case.

2219. The definite article *al* has here a generic meaning, and is best translated by "every".

2220. From the context the engagements referred to would relate to beneficial contracts connected with the orphan's property or promises or undertakings given by the guardian or implied in the terms of his appointment. But the words are general and may be interpreted in the general sense. Note that this sentence does not occur in the similar passage in vi. 152, where there was a discussion of social laws ; it is appropriate here, where the discussion is about the guardian's personal and individual responsibility in a spiritual sense.

2221. Giving just measure and weight is not only right in itself but is ultimately to the best spiritual and material advantage of the person who gives it.

2222. Idle curiosity may lead us to nose into evil, through our ignorance that it is evil. We must guard against every such danger. We must only hear the things that are known to us to be of good report, and see things that are good and instructive, and entertain in our hearts feelings or in our minds ideas that we have reason to expect will be spiritually profitable to us. We shall be called to account for the exercise of every faculty that has been given to us. This goes a little farther than a famous sculpture on a Japanese temple in which three monkeys are shown as putting their hands to their ears, eyes, and mouths, respectively, to show that they were not prepared to hear any evil, or see any evil, or speak any evil. Here idle curiosity is condemned. Futility is to be avoided even if it does not reach the degree of positive evil.

2223. Insolence, or arrogance, or undue elation at our powers or capacities, is the first step to many evils. Besides, it is unjustified. All our gifts are from God.

Canst not rend the earth
Asunder, nor reach
The mountains in height.

38. Of all such things
The evil is hateful
In the sight of thy Lord.

39. These are among the (precepts
Of) wisdom, which thy Lord
Has revealed to thee.²²²⁴
Take not, with God,
Another object of worship,
Lest thou shouldst be thrown
Into Hell, blameworthy and
rejected.²²²⁵

40. Has then your Lord,
(O Pagans!) preferred for you
Sons, and taken for Himself
Daughters among the angels? ²²²⁶
Truly ye utter
A most dreadful saying!

لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ
وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولًا ۝

٣٨- كُلُّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ سَيِّئُهُ
عِندَ رَبِّكَ مَكْرُوهًا ۝

٣٩- ذَلِكَ مِمَّا أَوْحَى إِلَيْكَ
رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ
وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ
فَتُلْقَى فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَلُومًا مَدْحُورًا ۝

٤٠- أَفَأَصْفَكُمْ رَبُّكُمُ بِالْبَنِينَ
وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنَاثًا
إِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُولُونَ قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا ۝

- C. 130.—There is none like unto God. Exalted
(xvii. 41-60.) Beyond measure is He. All Creation
Declares His glory. His revelation
Is Truth, but is beyond comprehension
To those who believe not in the Hereafter.
Those who serve Him should beware
Lest words unseemly should escape them,
Whether to friend or foe. Avoid
Dissensions, and know that God's Wrath
When kindled is a terrible thing,
But we rejoice that He forbears and forgives.

2224. The moral law, as expounded in xvii. 23-39 is far in advance of the bare Decalogue in that it searches out motives, and draws pointed attention to the weak and helpless if we are to reach any spiritual understanding of God. It begins with a mention of the worship of the One True God and ends with a similar mention to close the argument, thus emphasizing the fact that the love of God embraces the love of man and practical help to our fellow-creatures.

2225. "Blameworthy" carries us back by reminiscence to xvii. 29, between which and this verse there is mention of crimes committed out of covetousness and a selfish disregard of other people's rights. "Rejected" carries back our reminiscence to xvii. 18, from which to here we have a reference to crimes that lead to deprivation of God's grace. The latter is of course wider than the former. Note how subtly the two streams of thought are here conjoined.

2226. Cf. xvi. 57-59. Insistence on true worship means also exclusion of false worship or worship derogatory to God. In circles where daughters were despised and even their lives had to be protected by special legislation, what could have been more dreadful than ascribing daughters to God?

SECTION 5.

41. **W**e have explained (things)
In various (ways) in this Qur-ān,
In order that they may receive²²²⁷
Admonition, but it only increases
Their flight (from the Truth)!

٣١- وَلَقَدْ صَدَقْنَا فِي هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَّكَّرُوا
وَمَا يَرْجِدُ هُمْ إِلَّا نَقْوَراً ۝

42. Say : if there had been
(Other) gods with Him,—
As they say,—behold,
They would certainly have
Sought out a way
To the Lord of the Throne!²²²⁸

٣٢- قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ مَعَهُ آلِهَةٌ
كَمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذْ الْأَبْتَقُوا
إِلَىٰ ذِي الْعَرْشِ سَبِيلًا ۝

43. Glory to Him ! He is high
Above all that they say!—
Exalted and Great (beyond
measure) !

٣٣- سُبْحَنَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ
عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا ۝

44. The seven heavens and the earth,
And all beings therein,
Declare His glory :
There is not a thing
But celebrates His praise ;
And yet ye understand not
How they declare His glory !²²²⁹
Verily He is Oft-Forbearing,
Most Forgiving !

٣٤- تَسْبِيحٌ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ
وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ ۚ وَإِنْ تَرَىٰ شَيْءًا
وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ۝

45. **W**hen thou dost recite
The Qur-ān, We put,

٣٥- وَإِذَا قُرَأَ الْقُرْآنُ جَعَلْنَا

2227. Things are explained in the Qur-ān from all points of view, individual and national, by means of stories, parables, and figures of speech, and by way of categorical commands. But those who are evil, instead of profiting by such instruction, often go farther and farther away from the Truth.

2228. There is only One True God. But if, as polytheists say, there had been subsidiary gods, they would yet have had to go to the Throne of the Supreme God, for they could have done nothing without Him. Thus the Islamic idea of the unity of the Godhead is quite different from polytheistic ideas of a supreme god, as in the Greek Pantheon, where Jupiter was often defied by the minor deities ! But such ideas are absurd, as stated in the next verse.

2229. All Creation, animate and inanimate, sings God's praises and celebrates His glory,—animate, with consciousness, and inanimate, in the evidence which it furnishes of the unity and glory of God. The mystics believe that there is a soul in inanimate things also, which declares forth the glory of God. For all Nature bears witness to His power, wisdom, and goodness. It is only "ye", i.e., those who reject the whole trend of your nature and deny Faith simply because ye have been given a limited amount of choice and free-will,—it is only such as "ye" that understand not what every other creature understands and proclaims with joy and pride. What must be your degradation ! And yet God bears with you and forgives you ! Such is His goodness !

Between thee and those who
Believe not in the Hereafter,
A veil invisible; ²²³⁰

46. And We put coverings
Over their hearts (and minds)
Lest they should understand
The Qur-an, and deafness ²²³¹
Into their ears: when thou
Dost commemorate thy Lord—
And Him alone—in the Qur-an,
They turn on their backs,
Fleeing (from the Truth).

47. We know best why it is
They listen, when they listen ²²³²
To thee; and when they
Meet in private conference,
Behold, the wicked say,
"Ye follow none other than
A man bewitched!"

48. See what similes they strike
For thee: but they have gone
Astray, and never can they
Find a way. ²²³³

49. They say: "What!
When we are reduced

بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ
حِجَابًا مَبْسُورًا ۝

٢٦- وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ
أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا
وَإِذَا ذُكِّرْتُمْ رَكِبَتْ فِي الْفُرْقَانِ وَخَذَهُ
وَلَوْ أَعْلَى أَدْبَارِهِمْ مُخَوَّرًا ۝

٢٧- نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُونَ بِهِ إِذْ
يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِذْ هُمْ يَخْجَوْنَ
إِذْ يَقُولُ الظَّالِمُونَ
إِنْ تَنْتَهِمُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا ۝

٢٨- أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ
فَقُصِّلُوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا ۝

٢٩- وَقَالُوا عَرِذَاكَ كُنَّا

2230. *Veil invisible*: Some Commentators understand *masār* here as equivalent to *sāṭir*: a veil that makes invisible, a thick or dark veil. But I think that the meaning of *masār* (in the passive voice) as "hidden or invisible" is more consonant with the mystic meaning of the whole passage. If all nature, external and within ourselves, declares God's glory, those unfortunates who cut themselves off from their better nature are isolated from the men of God and the revelation of God, because (1) they are unfit for being in their company, and (2) because the men of God and the revelation of God must be protected from the pain which blasphemy or rebellion must cause to their unsullied nature. The veil is none the less real because it is invisible.

2231. The invisible veil being put against the ungodly on account of their deliberate rejection of Truth, the result is that their minds are fogged so that they cannot understand and their ears are clogged so that they cannot hear. In other words the effects of Evil become cumulative in shutting out God's grace.

2232. See last note. That being so, the only motive for the ungodly to listen to God's Truth is to scoff at it instead of to be instructed by it. They may make a show of listening, but when they meet together in private, they show themselves in their true colours. Cf. ii. 14. They cannot help seeing that there is singular charm and attractiveness in God's Word, and that it consoles, helps, and elevates many people who receive it in the right spirit. So they pretend that they are superior to such people and laugh at them for listening to some one who is only under the influence of something which they call magic!

2233. Note that the word used is "Sabīlan" "a way", not "the way". In going astray they have lost the way; but never can they find any means of getting back to that way, or of justifying themselves or making good their wicked similes.

To bones and dust,
Should we really be raised up
(To be) a new creation ?]”²²³⁴

50. Say : “(Nay!) be ye
Stones or iron,

51. “ Or created matter
Which, in your minds,
Is hardest (to be raised up),—
(Yet shall ye be raised up) ! ”
Then will they wag
“ Who will cause us
To return ? ” Say : “ He
Who created you first ! ”
Then will they wag
Their heads towards thee,²²³⁵
And say, “ When will
That be ? ” Say, “ Maybe
It will be quite soon !

52. “ It will be on a Day
When He will call you,
And ye will answer
(His call) with (words
Of) His praise, and ye²²³⁶
Will think that ye tarried
But a little while ! ”²²³⁷

عَظَامًا وَرُفَاتًا
مَرَاتًا لَتَسْبُحُوْنَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا
هـ قُلْ كُونُوا حِجَارَةً أَوْ حَدِيدًا

اھ اَوْ خَلْقًا مِّمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِي صُدُورِكُمْ
فَسَيَقُولُوْنَ مَنْ يُعِيدُنَا
قُلْ الَّذِي فَطَرَكُمْ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ
فَسَيُنْغِضُوْنَ إِلَيْكَ رُءُوسَهُمْ
وَيَقُولُوْنَ مَتَى هُوَ
قُلْ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَرِيبًا

هـ-يَوْمَ يَدْعُوكُمْ
فَتَسْتَجِيبُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ
وَتُظْهِرُوْنَ أَنْ لَيْسَ لَكُمُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

2234. They do not realise that God Who created them once out of nothing can create them again and again, with memories of their past, and in order to render to Him an account of how they used or misused the talents and opportunities which they were given. If it is to be a new Creation, what then? Bones and dust or ashes may yet retain something of the personality which was enshrined in them. But even if they were reduced to stones or iron or anything which their minds can conceive of as being most unlike them, yet there is nothing impossible to God! He has clearly sent a Message that we shall have to render an account of ourselves, and His Message is necessarily true.

2235. The sceptic shifts his ground when he is cornered in argument. It is no longer tenable for him to say that it cannot happen or that there is no one who can bring him back to life and memory. He now gets shaky, and says, “ Well, when is that going to happen ? ” The actual time no man can tell. Indeed that event will be on a plane in which there will be no Time. Our relative ideas of time and place will have been completely overthrown, and it will appear to us then, not that it has been postponed too long, but that it has come too soon! See the next verse and note.

2236. It may be that this verse should not be in the inverted commas governed by the verb “ say ”, in the last clause of the last verse. In that case, the answer to the sceptic would be finished in the last verse, and this verse would be a general statement applying also to the righteous, who will rise up celebrating the praises of God. But on the whole, I think it is better to take this verse as part of the answer to the sceptic referred to in the last verse.

2237. Whatever may have been your spiritual blindness in this life, the “ new creation ” will have opened your eyes to the Truth. No one will any longer be in any delusion as regards the Reality of God, and all will be forced, by their new circumstances, to recognise the Truth and sing God’s praises. And all will be surprised at the seemingly short flight of time since they had their little ephemeral life on this earth. They will now appraise its true worth.

SECTION 6.

53. Say to My servants
That they should (only) say
Those things that are best :²²³⁸
For Satan doth sow
Dissensions among them :
For Satan is to man
An avowed enemy.

٥٣- وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ
أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ بَيْنَهُمْ
إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا
مُبِينًا ○

54. It is your Lord
That knoweth you best :
If He please, He granteth²²³⁹
You mercy, or if He please,
Punishment : We have not sent
Thee to be a disposer
Of their affairs for them.

٥٤- رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ
إِنْ يَشَأْ يُرْحَمَكُم
أَوْ إِنْ يَشَأْ يُعَذِّبَكُم
وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلًا ○

55. And it is your Lord
That knoweth best all things
That are in the heavens²²⁴⁰
And on earth : We
Did bestow on some Prophets
More (and other) gifts
Than on others : And We gave
To David (the gift²²⁴¹
Of) the Psalms.

٥٥- وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ
بِمَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيِّينَ عَلَى بَعْضٍ
وَأَتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زُبُورًا ○

2238. This command refers to two situations. (1) Even to your enemies and the enemies of God you should speak fair : who are you to judge others? Judgment belongs to God alone, for He knows you (i.e. all mankind) best, and your personal knowledge is at best imperfect. And Satan is always trying to divide mankind. (2) Amongst yourselves, also, you should not entertain suspicions, but speak politely according to the best standards of human speech. A false or unkind word may destroy all your efforts at building up unity, because the forces of disruption are more numerous than the forces of unity.

2239. Man should never for a single moment entertain a thought that would imply that he was wiser than God. God's knowledge is all-embracing. If He grants mercy to some that you consider wicked or punishment to some that you consider righteous, it is your knowledge or your deductions that are at fault, not God's righteous Plan. Even men of God are not sent to arrange or dispose of men's affairs, but only to teach God's Message. How much less can ordinary men presume to judge other men? The *Mashiyat*—Will and Plan of God—is above all human wisdom.

2240. Not only are we not to judge other ordinary men and carp at them. We are not to set up false standards for judging the men of God. If one was born of the unlearned Arab race, he yet was a Mercy to all the worlds. If one spoke to God as *Kalīmullah* or another's life as *Ruh-ullah* began with a spiritual miracle; it does not imply superiority. It only means that God's wisdom is more profound than we can fathom.

2241. The spiritual gifts with which the prophets came may themselves take different forms, according to the needs of the world and the times in which they lived, as judged by the wisdom of God. A striking example here given is the gift of song and music as given to David, but it implies no superiority of David over others. David was given the *Zabūr*, the Psalter or Psalms, intended to be sung for the worship of God and the celebration of God's praise. For the Book of Psalms, see the last part of n. 669 to iv. 163, where exactly the same words are used about David.

56. **Say** : " Call on those—
Besides Him—whom ye fancy :
They have neither the power
To remove your troubles
From you nor to change them." ²²⁴²

57. Those whom they call upon
Do desire (for themselves) means
Of access to their Lord,—
Even those who are nearest : ²²⁴³
They hope for His Mercy
And fear His Wrath :
For the Wrath of thy Lord
Is something to take heed of.

58. **There** is not a population
But We shall destroy it
Before the Day of Judgment
Or punish it with
A dreadful Penalty : ²²⁴⁴
That is written
In the (eternal) Record.

59. And We refrain from sending
The Signs, only because
The men of former generations
Treated them as false : ²²⁴⁵

٥٦- قُلْ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ رَعَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ
فَلَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ كُشْفُ الضَّرِّ عَنْكُمْ
وَلَا تَنْفَعُكُمْ ۝

٥٧- أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ
إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ
وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ
إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا ۝

٥٨- وَإِنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوهَا
قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الرِّجْمَةِ أَوْ مَعَذَابُهَا عَذَابًا
شَدِيدًا
كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ۝

٥٩- وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَنْ نُرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا
أَنَّ كَذَّابٍ بِهَا الْأَوَّلُونَ

2242. Men's suspicions of each other or of the prophets have been condemned in the previous verses. We now have the strongest condemnation of all, that of imagining any other being as being equal or in the same category with the One True God. God has all power: they have no power. They cannot remove men's troubles. They cannot even mitigate or change them so as to afford the least relief. Why indulge in false worship?

2243. Where men or heroes, or prophets or angels are worshipped, the worship is futile; because (1) even if they are good and holy, and ever so near to God, yet the nearest of them have need to seek means of access to God, and they do seek such means, viz.: the hope of God's Grace; (2) though by their very nature it is impossible for us to suppose that they will incur the Wrath of God, yet they are but creatures and are subject to the law of personal responsibility.

2244. These verses are a commentary on the last clause of the last verse. "The Wrath of thy Lord is something to take heed of." The godless thoughtlessly challenge God's Wrath, but do they realise its nature? Even the best of us must be moved with terror when we think of its consequences, were it not for His unbounded Mercy. Those who deny the Hereafter fail to realise its terrible Portents. They ask for Portents and Miracles now, but do they realise that their coming means destruction and misery for those who reject faith? They will come soon enough. The whole world will be convulsed before the Day of Judgment. The part of the wise is to prepare for it.

2245. Past generations treated Signs and Portents with contempt or rebellion, and brought about their own undoing. It is only God's Mercy that gives them Grace for a time and prevents the coming of those Portents and Punishments which would overwhelm them if they were put to their trial at once.

We sent the She-camel²²⁴⁶
To the Thamūd to open
Their eyes, but they
Treated her wrongfully:
We only send the Signs
By way of terror
(And warning from evil).²²⁴⁷

وَاتَيْنَا ثَمُودَ النَّاقَةَ
مُبْجِرَةً فَلَمْ يَكُونُوا بِهَا
وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَخْوِيفًا

60. Behold ! We told thee
That thy Lord doth encompass
Mankind round about :²²⁴⁸
We granted the Vision
Which We showed thee,²²⁴⁹
But as a trial for men,—
As also the Cursed Tree²²⁵⁰
(Mentioned) in the Qur-an :
We put terror (and warning)
Into them, but it only
Increases their inordinate
transgression !

۞ وَلَوْ تُلَوُّنَا لَكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي آتَيْنَاكَ
إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ
وَالشَّجَرَةُ الْمَلْعُونَةُ فِي الْقُرْآنِ
وَتَخَوُّهُمْ فَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ
إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا ۞

2246. An example is cited from the story of the Thamūd. A wonderful She-camel was sent among them as a Portent and a Symbol. In their wickedness they ham-strung her. So instead of her reclaiming them she was a cause of their destruction, as their sin and rebellion were laid bare. For the story of the She-camel and the references to the passages in which she is mentioned, see n. 1044 to vii. 73.

2247. Signs, Miracles, and Portents are sent by God as a warning, to strike terror into the hearts of evil-doers and reclaim them to the right path. I have discussed Fear as a motive for reclaiming certain kinds of hard hearts, in my note 82 to ii. 74. But some hearts are so hard that even this motive does not work. As they have a limited free-will given by God, they are to that extent free to choose. But when they actually choose evil, God in His infinite Mercy delays their punishment and removes the occasion for their immediate self-destruction by withholding the Signs which might make them transgress all the more and compass their total destruction.

2248. The reference may be to lxxii. 28, probably an earlier Meccan revelation. But the argument is independent of time. This verse falls naturally into three divisions. Warnings and Portents and Signs are sent or not sent according to God's All-Wise Plan of Mercy and Justice: this is in no wise inconsistent with the apparent freedom given to the wicked: because (1) in any case God is all round all His creatures, and His delay as a Sign of Mercy in no way diminishes His power; (2) the Visions of Truth vouchsafed to men of God are themselves Signs by which they can warn the ungodly; and (3) sometimes it is more merciful to give them time by not immediately bringing the matter to judgment.

2249. Some Commentators take this as referring to the Mi'rāj (xvii. 1) and others to other spiritual visions. Such visions are miracles, and become a stumbling block to unbelievers.

2250. The tree Zaqqūm, a bitter and pungent tree described as growing at the bottom of Hell, a type of all that is disagreeable. See xxxvii. 62-63; xlii. 43-46; and lvi. 52. All these are Sūras chronologically earlier than this sūra. The application of the name to a tree of the myrobalan kind in the region of Jericho is, I think, of post-Quranic date.

Why is it a trial for men? See xxxvii. 63 and n. 4073.

- C. 131.—Arrogance, jealousy, spite, and hatred
(xvii. 61-84.) Were the cause of the fall of Iblīs. Man
Was given pre-eminence above
Much of God's Creation, and owes
Higher responsibilities. He should give thanks
For God's mercies, and remember
The Day of Account. Not all the scheming
Of Evil will deflect God's righteous Plan
To protect His chosen ones. They should pray
Without ceasing, and seek His true Guidance;
For Truth will last, but Falsehood will perish.

SECTION 7.

61. Behold! We said to the
angels: ²²⁵¹
"Bow down unto Adam":
They bowed down except Iblīs:
He said, "Shall I bow down
To one whom Thou didst create
From clay?"

وَاذْكُرْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنْ سَجَدُوا لِآدَمَ
فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ
قَالَ أَأَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِينًا ۝

62. He said, "Seest Thou? This is
The one whom Thou hast honoured
Above me! If Thou wilt but
Respite me to the Day
Of Judgment, I will surely
Bring his descendants
Under my sway—
All but a few!" ²²⁵²

۞ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَكَ هَذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْتَ
عَلَيَّ لَكُنْ أَخْرَجْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ
الْقِيَامَةِ لَأَخْتَنَّكَ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝

63. (God) said: "Go thy way; ²²⁵³
If any of them follow thee,
Verily Hell will be
The recompense of you (all)—
An ample recompense.

۞ قَالَ أَذْهَبَ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ
فَأَن جَهَنَّمَ جَزَاءُكُمْ جَزَاءً
مَّقْضُورًا ۝

2251. Cf. vii. 11-18, which deals, as is the case here, with the temptation of the individual human soul, while ii. 30-38 deals with the collective race of man through Adam. Arrogance, jealousy, spite, and hatred are the ingredients in the story of Iblīs.

2252. The power of Evil over man is due to man's limited free-will. In other words man hands himself to Evil. As to those who loyally worship and serve God, Evil has no power over them. This is expressly mentioned in verse 65 below, and in other places.

2253. The power of Evil is summarily dismissed, but not without a clear warning. "Do thy worst; if any of them misuse their limited free-will and deliberately follow thee, they must take the consequences with thee; all of you must answer according to your personal responsibility."

64. "Lead to destruction those
Whom thou canst among them,²²⁵⁴
With thy (seductive) voice;²²⁵⁵
Make assaults on them²²⁵⁶
With thy cavalry and thy
Infantry; mutually share
With them wealth and children;²²⁵⁷
And make promises to them."
But Satan promises them
Nothing but deceit.²²⁵⁸

٦٤- وَاسْتَفْزِزْ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ
بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمُ
بِخَيْبِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ
فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ وَحَدِّثْهُمْ
وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ۝

65. "As for My servants,²²⁵⁹
No authority shalt thou
Have over them:"
Enough is thy Lord
For a Disposer of affairs.²²⁶⁰

٦٥- إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ
سُلْطَانٌ وَكَفَى بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلًا ۝

66. **V**our Lord is He
That maketh the Ship
Go smoothly for you
Through the sea, in order that
Ye may seek of His Bounty.²²⁶¹
For He is unto you
Most Merciful.

٦٦- رَبُّكُمْ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ لَكُمْ الْفُلْكَ
فِي الْبَحْرِ لِتَنْتَقُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ۝

67. When distress seizes you
At sea, those that ye
Call upon—besides Himself—
Leave you in the lurch!
But when He brings you back
Safe to land, ye turn

٦٧- وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ جَلَّ
مَنْ تَدْعُونَ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ
فَلَمَّا بَلَغْتُمُ الْبَرَّ آخَرُ ضَرْمٍ ۝

2254. "Do thy worst; but ye are both warned that that path leads to destruction."

2255. Evil has many snares for mankind. The one that is put in the foreground is the voice,—the seductive personal appeal, that "makes the worse appear the better part".

2256. The forcible assault of Evil is next mentioned under the metaphor of cavalry and infantry. It is when cajolery and tempting fair-seeming seem to fail that an attack is made in force with weapons of violence, of all kinds, like the different arms in an organised army.

2257. If the first assaults are resisted, Evil has other weapons in its armoury. Tangible fruits are dangled before the eyes, ill-gotten gains and children of sin, that follow from certain very alluring methods of indulgence in passions. Or it may be children dedicated to sin or worldly gains, etc. And then there are all kinds of promises for the future.

2258. This is a parenthetical clause inserted to show up what the promises of the Evil One are worth.

2259. This verse should be read along with the two preceding ones to complete their meaning. Evil has no power except over those who yield to its solicitations.

2260. As Evil has no authority over the sincere servants of God, they should put their trust completely in Him. For He is All-Sufficient to carry out their affairs, and by His grace, to save them from all harm and danger.

2261. This illustration of the sea, and the skill with which, by God's grace, men pass through it with ease in order to earn material gains by commerce, social gains by human intercourse, and spiritual gains by knowledge, is frequently used to enforce God's goodness to man. Cf. ii. 164.

Away (from Him). Most
ungrateful ²²⁶²
Is man !

68. Do ye then feel secure
That He will not cause you
To be swallowed up
Beneath the earth ²²⁶³
When ye are on land,
Or that He will not send
Against you a violent tornado
(With showers of stones)
So that ye shall find
No one to carry out
Your affairs for you ?

69. Or do ye feel secure
That He will not send you
Back a second time
To sea and send against you
A heavy gale to drown you
Because of your ingratitude, ²²⁶⁴
So that ye find no helper
Therein against Us ?

70. We have honoured the sons
Of Adam ; provided them
With transport on land and sea ;
Given them for sustenance things
Good and pure ; and conferred
On them special favours,
Above a great part
Of Our Creation. ²²⁶⁵

وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ كَفُورًا ۝

٦٨- أَفَأَمِنْتُمْ أَن يُخْسِفَ بِكُمْ
جَانِبَ الدَّيْرِ
أَوْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا
ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا
لَكُمْ وَكِيلًا ۝

٦٩- أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ أَن يُعِيدَ كُفْرَ فِيهِ تَارَةً
أُخْرَى فَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ قَاصِفًا مِّنَ الرِّيحِ
فَيُغَيِّرَ نِعْمَتُكُمْ بِمَا كُفَرْتُمْ
ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَاهُ تَنْيِعًا ۝

٧٠- وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ
وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ
وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَقَطَّلْنَاهُمْ
عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ۝

2262. Against God's gracious gifts and mercies is contrasted man's ingratitude. In danger he remembers the One true God, but relapses into his own fancies when the danger is past. Cf. also x. 22-23.

2263. Man is safe neither on land nor at sea except by the grace and mercy of God. How forcibly this is brought home to us by the Quetta earthquake of 31st May 1935, when tens of thousands of men, women and children perished in a few moments, by night, buried in the débris ! The stories of violent destructive tornadoes in such areas as the southern United States are equally impressive. The destruction is so sudden that the victims have no time to arrange anything. They are simply wiped out.

2264. If a man flees from the Wrath of God, there is no place secure for him. He may flee from sea to land, and back again from land to sea. But his life depends on the Disposer of all affairs. He may go again and again to sea, and perhaps finally end by being drowned.

2265. The distinction and honour conferred by God on man are recounted in order to enforce the corresponding duties and responsibilities of man. He is raised to a position of honour above the brute creation; he has been granted talents by which he can transport himself from place to place by land, sea, and now by air; all the means for the sustenance and growth of every part of his nature are provided by God; and his spiritual faculties (the greatest gift of God) raise him above the greater part of God's Creation. Should he not then realise his noble destiny and prepare for his real life in the Hereafter ?

SECTION 8.

71. One day We shall call
Together all human beings
With their (respective) Imāms: ²²⁶⁶
Those who are given their record
In their right hand
Will read it (with pleasure),
And they will not be
Dealt with unjustly
In the least. ²²⁶⁷

72. But those who were blind
In this world, will be
Blind in the Hereafter, ²²⁶⁸
And most astray
From the Path.

73. And their purpose was
To tempt thee away
From that which We
Had revealed unto thee,
To substitute in Our name
Something quite different: ²²⁶⁹
(In that case), behold!
They would certainly have
Made thee (their) friend!

74. And had We not
Given thee strength,

٤١-يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ
فَمَنْ أُوْقِي كِتَابَهُ يَكُونُ مِنْهُ
فَأُولَئِكَ يَقْرَأُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ
وَلَا يَظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ۝

٤٢-وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى
فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى
وَاصْلٌ سَبِيلًا ۝

٤٣-وَلَوْ أَنَّ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي
أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ
لَتَفْتَنَی عَلَيْنَا غَيْرُهُ ۖ
وَإِذَا لَا تُغْنِيكَ ذَلِكَ خَلِيلًا ۝

٤٤-وَلَوْ لَا أَنْ تَكُنْ تَكُنْ

2266. I have discussed the various meanings of *Imām* in ii. 124, n. 124. What is the meaning here? The Commentators are divided. Some understand the meaning to be that each People or Group will appear with its Leader, who will bear witness to its virtues or sins: Cf. xvi. 84. Another view is that the *Imām* is their revelation, their Book. A third is that the *Imām* is the record of deeds spoken of in the next clause. I prefer the first.

2267. Literally, by the value of a *faṭṭil*, a small skin in the cleft of a date-stone: this has no value.

2268. On the Judgment Day the children of light will receive and peruse their record, and will render joyful thanks to God for His Mercies. What of the children of darkness? They had already been blind in this world's life, and they will not receive the light of God's Countenance then. On the contrary they will find that the longer the time they have travelled, the farther away they have gone from the Path. Notice the association of ideas—blindness, not seeing the light, going farther and farther away from the true Path.

2269. It happens with men of God, and it happened with the holy Prophet, that they are tempted by the world with many things which appeal to the world generally, if they would make some small concession in their favour. The "small concession" may hold the key of the position, and neutralise the whole teaching sent by God. If the Prophet had accepted wealth and position among the Quraish and "only respected" their idols! The Quraish would have taken him into their inner circle! A dishonest liar like Musailama would have jumped at the opportunity and been hailed as a friend and associate and made much of. But men of God are made of sterner stuff. They are given special strength to resist all plausible deception.

Thou wouldst nearly
Have inclined to them ²²⁷⁰
A little.

75. In that case We should
Have made thee taste
An equal portion (of punishment)
In this life, and an equal portion ²²⁷¹
In death: and moreover
Thou wouldst have found
None to help thee against Us! ²²⁷²

76. Their purpose was to scare
Thee off the land, ²²⁷³
In order to expel thee;
But in that case they
Would not have stayed
(Therein) after thee,
Except for a little while.

77. (This was Our) way
With the apostles We sent
Before thee: thou wilt find
No change in Our ways. ²²⁷⁴

SECTION 9.

78. Establish regular prayers— ²²⁷⁵
At the sun's decline

لَقَدْ كُنْتَ تَرْكُنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا ۝

٤٥- إِذَا لَدَّكَ
ضَعُفَ الْحِيلَةُ وَضَعُفَ الْمَكَاتُ
ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا كَصِيرًا ۝

٤٦- وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَسْتَفْرِزُونَكَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ
لَيُخْرِجُونَكَ مِنْهَا وَإِذَا لَا يَلْبَثُونَ
خَلْقَكَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝

٤٧- سُنَّةٌ مَن قَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ
رُسُلِنَا وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيلًا ۝

٤٨- اِقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِلذَّلُولِ الْفَاقِسِ

2270. From a purely human point of view it may seem policy to make a small "concession" to men's weakness in order to fulfil a divine mission. But the divine Messenger is given special strength to resist such temptations.

2271. If such a thing was possible for a true Apostle of God, viz.: a compromise with evil and a dereliction of his mission, he would be no exception to the law of personal responsibility. Indeed, as the power and the responsibility were greater, the punishment would have been greater too. It would have been double,—an exposure in this life and the usual punishment in or after death for a desertion of the Truth.

2272. The motive held out by the world for a compromise with Truth is itself fallacious. The motive is that the compromise may bring influence, position, and opportunity, if not wealth and the other good things of life. But these themselves (if attained) would be of no use or help if pitted against the command of God.

2273. As happened in the case of the holy Prophet, the enemies try to frighten the man of God away from their midst, so that, once away, they could expel him and keep him out. But they are counting without the Plan of God. If they persecute the righteous, they dig their own graves!

2274. This was no new thing in history. God protects His own, and the ungodly cannot long enjoy the fruits of their unrighteousness even if their punishment be delayed a little while.

2275. The Commentators understand here the Command for the five daily canonical prayers, viz.: the four from the declination of the sun from the zenith to the fullest darkness of the night, and the early morning prayer, Fajr, which is usually accompanied by a reading of the holy Qur-ān. The four afternoon prayers are: Zuhr, immediately after the sun begins to decline in the afternoon; 'Asr, in the late afternoon; Ma'grib, immediately after sunset; and 'Ishā, after the glow of sunset has disappeared and the full darkness of the night has set in. There is difference of opinion as to the meaning of particular words and phrases, but none as to the general effect of the passage.

Till the darkness of the night,
And the morning prayer
And reading: for the prayer
And reading in the morning
Carry their testimony.²²⁷⁶

إِلَى عَسَقِ الْبَيْلِ وَقُرْآنِ الْفَجْرِ
إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا

79. And pray in the small watches²²⁷⁷
Of the morning: therein
Is much (spiritual) profit
To thee—and the hope
That thy Lord will send thee
To the Place of Praise and
Glory!²²⁷⁸

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ
كَافَّةً لَكَ
عَسَى أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا
مُحْمُودًا

80. Say: "O my Lord!
Let my entry be²²⁷⁹
By the Gate of Truth
And Honour, and likewise
My exit by the Gate
Of Truth and Honour;
And grant me
From Thy Presence
An authority to aid (me)."²²⁸⁰

أ. وَقُلْ رَبِّ ادْخُلْنِي
مَدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ
وَأَخْرِجْنِي مَخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ
وَاجْعَلْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ سُلْطَانًا
نَصِيرًا

2276. The morning prayer is, specially singled out for separate mention, because the morning is a "holy hour" and special spiritual influences act on the soul awaking from the night's rest. Special testimony is borne to the prayers of this hour by the angelic host.

2277. This is held to be addressed specially to the holy Prophet who usually prayed more than the five canonical prayers. The *Tahajjud* was a prayer after midnight, in the small watches of the morning.

2278. To the Prophet was to be assigned in the Hereafter the highest Post of Honour and Glory—the *Maqām Muḥmūd*. There is much mystic meaning in this, implying his excellence above all other Prophets.

2279. The entry and exit here referred to may be interpreted in four senses: (1) entry into death and exit at the resurrection: for the righteous, who have purified their souls by prayer (last verse) and spiritual teaching from the Qur-ān (next verse), there is on each occasion a fuller and fuller realisation and enjoyment of truth and honour: for those who are estranged from God, the effect is the opposite: the truth becomes bitter and there is ignominy and exposure instead of honour: (2) entry for the holy Prophet into the new life at Medina, which was still in the womb of futurity, and exit from the life of persecution and the milieu of falsehood, which surrounded him in his native city of Mecca still given up to idolatry: (3) referring to the impending Hijrat again, the prayer may mean, "Let it be from pure motives of truth and spiritual honour, and not from motives of anger against the city of Mecca or its persecutors, or of ambition or worldly power from the city of Medina, which was ready to lay everything at the Apostle's feet": (4) generally, entry and exit at every stage of life.

2280. All prayer must be for God's aid and authority. However much we may plan, our success must depend on His aid. However noble our motives, we have no right to imperil any lives unless there is authority in the Word of God. The Apostle only acts on God's commission and inspiration.

81. And say: "Truth has (now)
Arrived, and Falsehood perished:
For Falsehood is (by its nature)
Bound to perish."²²⁸¹

٨١- وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَّقَ الْبَاطِلُ
إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا ٥

82. We send down (stage by stage)
In the Qur-an that which
Is a healing and a mercy
To those who believe:
To the unjust it causes
Nothing but loss after loss.²²⁸²

٨٢- وَنَزَّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ
مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ٥

83. Yet, when We bestow
Our favours on man,
He turns away and becomes
Remote on his side (instead
Of coming to Us), and when
Evil seizes him he
Gives himself up to despair!²²⁸³

٨٣- وَإِذَا آتَيْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ
أَعْرَاضَ وَآثَامًا يَّجَانِبُهَا
وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يُوسِسًا ٥

84. Say: "Everyone acts
According to his own disposition:
But your Lord knows best
Who it is that is
Best guided on the Way."²²⁸⁴

٨٤- قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلِهِ
فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَى سَبِيلًا ٥

C. 132.—Who can define the Spirit of Inspiration?
(xvii. 85-111.) Its gift is the highest of God's Mercies

To man. The Qur-ān is divine, and no carplings
Can affect its greatness or the greatness
Of the Messenger who brought it to men.
Those who reject it will be called
To account on the Day of Judgment. Let not
Pride and Ignorance rush, like Pharaoh,
To the Punishment of the Hereafter.
The Qur-ān as revealed by stages teaches
The Truth: learn it and chant it, and praise
The Beautiful Names of God for ever!

2281. From its nature falsehood must perish, for it is the opposite of Truth, and Truth must ever prevail.

2282. In God's revelation there is healing for our broken spirits, hope for our spiritual future, and joy in the forgiveness of our sins. All who work in faith will share in these privileges. It is only the rebels against God's Law who will suffer loss. The more they will oppose Truth, the deeper down will they go into the mire—the state of sin and Wrath, which is worse than destruction.

2283. Truth saves us from two extremes: when we are happy, we are saved from being puffed up, for we realise that everything comes from God; and when we suffer misfortunes, we are not in despair, for we know that God is our sure refuge and help.

2284. If the wicked go their own ways, there is nothing to discourage us. It is their way. We must seek and hold fast to true guidance.

SECTION 10.

85. They ask thee concerning
The Spirit (of inspiration) ²²⁸⁵
Say: "The Spirit (cometh)
By command of my Lord:
Of knowledge it is only
A little that is communicated
To you."

٨٥- وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ
قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي
وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝

86. If it were Our Will,
We could take away
That which We have
Sent thee by inspiration: ²²⁸⁶
Then wouldst thou find
None to plead thy affair
In that matter as against Us,—

٨٦- وَلَئِنْ شِئْنَا لَنَذْهَبَ بِالرُّوحِ
أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ
ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُ لَكَ بِهِ عَلَيْنَا وَكِيلًا ۝

87. Except for Mercy from thy
Lord: ²²⁸⁷
For His Bounty is
To thee (indeed) great.

٨٧- إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ
إِنَّ فَضْلَهُ كَانَ عَلَيْكَ كَبِيرًا ۝

88. Say: "If the whole
Of mankind and Jinns ²²⁸⁸
Were to gather together
To produce the like
Of this Qur-an, they
Could not produce
The like thereof, even if
They backed up each other

٨٨- قُلْ لَئِنْ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ
عَلَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ
هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ
وَلَوْ كَانُ بِعَظْمِهِمْ لَبَعْضُ

2285. What is the nature of inspiration? Who brings it? Can it ask its Bringer questions? Can we ask anything which we wish? These are the sort of questions always asked when inspiration is called in question. The answer is given here. Inspiration is one of those high spiritual mysteries which cannot be explained in the terms of our every-day human experience. It is spiritual. The Spirit (Gabriel) does not come of his own will. He comes by the command of God, and reveals what God commands him to reveal. Of the sum-total of true spiritual knowledge what a small part it is that ordinary mortals can understand! They can be only given that which they can understand, however dimly. We are not in a position to ask anything that we wish. If we did so, it would only make us look foolish, for the guidance comes from God's Wisdom, not from our worldly knowledge.

2286. Even the spiritual knowledge that comes to us comes because of the favour and mercy of God. If He were to withhold it, who can call Him in question?

2287. In that case the only one who can plead for us is the Mercy of God. We can interpret the phrase in its widest abstract sense, as well as in the concrete sense of the title which is applied to the holy Prophet Muhammad, the Mercy of God. Thus we come from the abstract question to the concrete question of the Qur-an, which is referred to by name in the verses that follow.

2288. For the meaning of "Jinns", see n. 929 to vi. 100.

With help and support.²²⁸⁹

89. And We have explained
To man, in this Qur-an,
Every kind of similitude:²²⁹⁰
Yet the greater part of men
Refuse (to receive it)
Except with ingratitude!²²⁹¹

90. They say: "We shall not
Believe in thee, until thou
Cause a spring to gush
Forth for us from the earth,"²²⁹²

91. "Or (until) thou have
A garden of date trees
And vines, and cause rivers
To gush forth in their midst,
Carrying abundant water;"²²⁹³

92. "Or thou cause the sky
To fall in pieces, as thou
Sayest (will happen), against
us;"²²⁹⁴

طهيرا

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا
الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَأَبَى أَكْثَرُ
النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا

۹۰- وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ بِكَ حَتَّى
تُفْرِكَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا

۹۱- أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ بَجَنَّةٌ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ
وَعِنَبٍ تُفَجِّرُ الْأَنْهَارَ خَالِهَا الْيَنْبُوعَاتُ

۹۲- أَوْ تَنْسُقَ السَّمَاءَ
كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا

2289. The proof of the Qur-an is in its own beauty and nature, and the circumstances in which it was promulgated. The world is challenged to produce a Book like it and has not produced one. It is the only revealed Book whose text stands pure and uncorrupted to-day. Cf. for a similar challenge, ii. 23, x. 38, and xi. 13.

2290. In the Qur-an everything is explained in detail from various points of view, by commands, similitudes, examples, stories, parables, etc. It does not merely narrate stories or lay down vague abstract propositions. It gives every detailed help in outward and inner life.

2291. One form in which it can be received with ingratitude is to pay verbal tributes to it but not study it as it ought to be studied (ii. 121, *faqqa tilawatih*), or to disobey its precepts or standards.

2292. Cf. ii. 60.

2293. This ill-assorted and crude jumble of the sort of miracles which the Unbelievers wanted is in very appropriate contrast to the sober and reasoned argument which is begun in the last sentence of verse 93 and continued in sections 11 and 12, which close this Sura. It is throughout reminiscent of the materialistic imagination of Jewish sceptics, which was mainly responsible for the fall of the Jewish nation (see verse 101 below). For a thirsty people sojourning in a dry land, the finding of a spring of water as in the story of Moses or of the well of Zamzam is an appropriate miracle. But miracles are not for faithless crowds to gape at. A beautiful well-watered Garden is a symbol of Felicity; but a sceptic cannot order God to produce it for his pleasure. The same may be said about a house adorned with gold, except that its symbolism is even more materialistic. The fall of the sky or producing God face to face or climbing to the skies by a ladder, or bringing down a book of parchment which men could handle, are all irreverent suggestions that make no distinction between spiritual and material things.

2294. Contrast the sublime passages like that beginning with lxxxii. 1, or that in xxv. 25, where the final breaking up of the firmaments as we know them is referred to in the world's catastrophe, with the ridiculous demand that it should be done for the sport of the sceptics!

Or thou bring God
And the angels before (us) .
Face to face;²²⁹⁵

أَوْتَأْتِي بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قَبِيلًا ۝

93. "Or thou have a house
Adorned with gold,
Or thou mount a ladder
Right into the skies.²²⁹⁶
No, we shall not even believe
In thy mounting until thou
Send down to us a book
That we could read."²²⁹⁷
Say: "Glory to my Lord!
Am I aught but a man,—
An apostle?"²²⁹⁸

٩٣- أَوْ يَكُونُ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ
أَوْ تَرَفِّي فِي السَّمَاءِ
وَلَكِنْ تَوَمَّنْ لِزُفْيَتِكَ حَتَّى
تُنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ كِتَابٌ تَقْرَأُ
قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي
هَلْ كُنْتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا مِّثْلَ سُوْلَا ۝

SECTION 11.

94. ~~What~~ hat kept men back
From Belief when Guidance
Came to them, was nothing
But this: they said,
"Has God sent a man²²⁹⁹
(Like us) to be (His) Apostle?"

٩٤- وَمَا مَنَعَهُ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ
الْهُدَى إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا
أَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ بَشَرًا مِّثْلَنَا ۝

95. Say, "If there were settled,
On earth, angels walking about²³⁰⁰

٩٥- قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَلَائِكَةٌ

2295. Cf. ii. 55 and iv. 153 about the desire of the Israelites to see God face to face; and vi. 8-9, about angels coming down to convince men.

2296. Cf. vi. 35 about a ladder to the skies.

2297. Cf. vi. 7 for the foolish idea of materialistic sceptics that a spiritual revelation could come down from the heavens on a piece of parchment that they can touch.

2298. An apostle of God is a man at the command of God, and not to satisfy the disingenuous whims and fancies of Unbelievers. Miracles greater than any that their foolish fancies could devise were before them. The Qur-ān was such a miracle, and it is a standing miracle that lasts through the ages. Why did they not believe? The real reason was spite and jealousy like that of Iblis. See next verse.

2299. When a man is raised to honour and dignity, his sincere brothers rejoice, for it is an honour that reflects its glory on them. But those with evil in their hearts are jealous like their prototype Iblis, (xvii. 61, n 2251). To such men the mere fact that their own brother receives the grace of God is enough to turn them against that brother. Any other reasons they may devise are mere make-believe.

2300. The argument is that if angels inhabited this earth, an angel from heaven could be sent down as an apostle to them, as they could mutually understand each other, and the Message of God could be explained without difficulty. But the earth is inhabited by men, and the men themselves are divided into races, or groups, or nations. To each Group is sent an apostle from among their brethren: to 'Ad, their brother Hūd (xi. 50); to Thāmūd, their brother Ṣāliḥ (xi. 61); and so on. As a matter of fact, with wicked men, constituted as they are, the appearance of an angel causes disturbance and an unseemly riot, as in the case of the angels that came to Lot (xi. 77-80). In any case they cannot carry out an effective mission among men (vi. 8-9).

In peace and quiet, We should
Certainly have sent them
Down from the heavens
An angel for an apostle."

96. Say: "Enough is God
For a witness between me ²³⁰¹
And you: for He is
Well acquainted with His servants,
And He sees (all things).

97. **يَت** is he whom God guides,
That is on true guidance ;
But he whom He leaves
Astray—for such wilt thou
Find no protector besides Him. ²³⁰²
On the Day of Judgment
We shall gather them together,
Prone on their faces,
Blind, dumb, and deaf :
Their abode will be Hell :
Every time it shows abatement,
We shall increase for them
The fierceness of the Fire. ²³⁰³

98. That is their recompense,
Because they rejected Our Signs,
And said, "When we are reduced
To bones and broken dust,
Should we really be raised up
(To be) a new Creation?" ²³⁰⁴

يَمْشُونَ مُطْمَئِنِّينَ لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَلَكًا رَسُولًا

٩٦- قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا

٩٧- وَمَن يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَمَتْبَدٍ
وَمَن يَضِلَّ فَلَنَجِدَ لَهُم أَوْلِيَاءَ
مِّن دُونِهِ
وَنَحْشُرُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ
عُصْبًا وَأَكْمًا وَصُمًّا
مَا أَوَّاهُمْ وَهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ
كُلَّمَا خَبَتْ زِدْنَاهُمْ سَعِيرًا

٩٨- ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ لَهُمْ بِكَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَقَالُوا إِذَا كُنَّا عِظًا وَرُفَاقًا
إِنَّا لَنَبْعَثُونَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا

2301. 'If you want a real witness, it is not these sorts of fancy miracles, but the witness of the true ever-living God. God is always everywhere—and with you. Purify your hearts, and ask Him in true contrition and repentance, and He will guide you and show you the Way.'

2302. 'All your insincere subtleties are of no use. The only real guidance is the guidance of God. If you do not seek His grace, you will be lost. Besides Him, there is no true friend or protector.'

2303. 'If you still persist in your evil ways, what is to be your evil end? You will become more and more identified with the Company of Evil. You will come to shame and ignominy, like men thrown down prone on their faces. You will lose the use of all the faculties of judgment with which God has endowed you. Instead of seeing, you will be blind to God's Signs. Instead of having the power of seeking Him in prayer and rejoicing in His grace, you will be dumb. Instead of hearing the harmony and music of the spheres, as typified in the pure and harmonious lives of men, you will hear nothing or only hear dull or confused sounds like deaf men. The scorching fire of your punishment will not grow less, but grow more fierce as you go deeper into Hell.'

2304. This phrase is repeated from xvii. 49. The reminiscence rounds off the argument. After certain moral precepts to which Faith was linked, we have had a discussion of Unfaith. Its various motives have been analysed, and its penalties have been allegorically shadowed forth. After this, the example of Pharaoh is held as a type of Unfaith in the next section, and the Sūra closed with an exhortation to faith and a declaration of the glory of God.

99. See they not that God,
Who created the heavens
And the earth, has power
To create the like of them²³⁰⁵
(Anew)? Only He has
Decreed a term appointed,
Of which there is no doubt.
But the unjust refuse
(To receive it) except
With ingratitude.²³⁰⁶

وَأَوَّلَهُمْ بَرَاءَ أَنْ إِلَهُهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ قَادِرٌ عَلَى أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ
وَجَعَلَ لَهُمْ أَجَلًا
لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ
فَأَبَى الظَّالِمُونَ إِلَّا كُفُورًا

100. Say: "If ye had
Control of the Treasures
Of the Mercy of my Lord,
Behold, ye would keep them
Back, for fear of spending
Them: for man
Is (ever) niggardly!"²³⁰⁷

۱۰۰- قُلْ لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ خَزَائِنَ
رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي
إِذْ لَا مَسْكَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ الْإِنْفَاقِ
وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ قَفُورًا

SECTION 12.

101. ~~Mo~~ Moses We did give
Nine Clear Signs:²³⁰⁸
Ask the Children of Israel:
When he came to them,²³⁰⁹
Pharaoh said to him:
"O Moses! I consider thee,

۱۰۱- وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ
بَيِّنَاتٍ فَمَنْ لَبَّى بِرُءُوسِهِمْ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ
فَقَالَ لَهُ فِرْعَوْنُ

2305. God, Who created all that is in the heavens and on earth, has surely the power to revive the life of individual souls after their bodies have perished,—and revive them with memories of their past life and for a continuation of their spiritual history. Only He has fixed a term for each stage of our existence, which we can neither prolong nor shorten.

2306. This phrase carries us back to xvii. 89, after we began the argument about the real motives for the rejection of the Qur-ān by sceptics. That argument is now closed in a sort of minor circle within the major circle sketched in n. 2304 above.

2307. A fresh argument is now addressed to those who would confine God's revelations to a limited circle of men, such as they themselves belonged to. The immediate reference was to the Jews, who could not understand how any Gentiles could receive revelations and guidance even superior to what they considered their own birth-right. But the tendency is widespread in the human race. A particular race, or caste, or a particular kind of culture, claims to be the custodian of God's Message, whereas it is universal. God's Mercy is universal, and He scatters the priceless Treasures of His Mercy broadcast among His creatures. They are not exhausted by spending. It is only the misers who hoard their wealth for fear it should be used up by spending. 'Are you spiritual misers going to keep back God's holy Message from the multitude? Is that the reason why you deny the advent of the new Teacher, who comes as a Mercy to all men—to all Creation?'

2308. *Nine Clear Signs*: see vii. 133, n. 1091. The story of Pharaoh (or a phase of it) is here told with a view to exhibiting the decline of a soul on account of pride in outward power and dignity.

2309. *To them*: i. e. to Pharaoh, as sitting in his Council, with the Chiefs of his People. Cf. vii. 103. The whole scene is described in some detail from the point of view of *nations* or *Ummats* in vii. 103-133.

Indeed, to have been
Worked upon by sorcery ! " ²³¹⁰

102. Moses said, "Thou knowest
Well that these things
Have been sent down by none
But the Lord of the heavens
And the earth as eye-opening ²³¹¹
Evidence: and I consider thee,
Indeed, O Pharaoh, to be
One doomed to destruction ! "

103. So he resolved to remove ²³¹²
them
From the face of the earth :
But We did drown him
And all who were with him.

104. And We said thereafter
To the Children of Israel,
"Dwell securely in the land ²³¹³
(Of promise) " : but when
The second of the warnings came
To pass, We gathered you
Together in a mingled crowd. ²³¹⁴

إِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ يُمُوسَىٰ مَسْحُورًا ۝

١٠٢- قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمَا أَنزَلَ
هَٰؤُلَاءِ إِلَهُ الْكَوْكَبَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضُ بِصَآئِرٍ ۖ
وَلِئِي لَأَظُنُّكَ يُفْرَعُونَ مَثْبُورًا ۝

١٠٣- فَأَرَادَ أَنْ يَنْتَفِيزَهُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ
فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَّعَهُ جَمِيعًا ۝

١٠٤- وَقُلْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ لِبَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ
اسْكُنُوا الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ
جِئْنَا بِكُمْ لَفِيفًا ۝

2310. At a different and later stage in the scene, Pharaoh's Chiefs call Moses a "sorcerer well-versed" (vii. 109). Here Moses, who had come with the Nine-Signs but had not yet shown them, is reproached with being the object of sorcery: he is practically told that he is mad!

2311. We can well suppose Moses to ask Pharaoh to recall all the past history of Moses, for Moses had been brought up in Pharaoh's palace in all the learning of the Egyptians. He could not therefore be mad, or a simpleton worked on by Egyptian magic. What he was going to show was something far greater: it was not the deceptive magic of Pharaoh's sorcerers, but true Signs that came from the God of all power. They were to open the eyes of his people, and if Pharaoh resisted faith, Moses warns him that Pharaoh in that case was doomed to destruction. This is the course of the soul that sinks down by Pride!

2312. Pharaoh on this tries various subterfuges and plans for removing not only Moses but all his people by doing away with them. The detailed story is not told here but may be read in S. vii. But God's Wrath descended on Pharaoh and those who were with him in body and mind. The Egyptians who repented were subject to Pharaoh's wrath but were saved from the Wrath of God (vii. 121-126).

2313. The Israelites were taken to the Promised Land in Palestine, and they established their own kingdom there, but they forfeited God's favour by their sins and backslidings and will have to answer like all souls by the law of personal responsibility at the Day of Judgment.

2314. The second of the warnings: the first was probably that mentioned above, in xvii. 5, and the second that mentioned in xvii. 7 (middle). When this second warning due to the rejection of Jesus came to pass, the Jews were gathered together in a mingled crowd, and they have never had a Jewish nationality since. Some Commentators understand the second warning to be the Day of Judgment, the Promise of the Hereafter.

105. ~~We~~ We sent down the (Qur-ān)
In Truth, and in Truth²³¹⁵
Has it descended: and We sent
Thee but to give Glad
Tidings and to warn (sinners).²³¹⁶

١٠٥-وَبِالْحَقِّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَّلَ
وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۝

106. (It is) a Qur-ān
Which We have divided
(Into parts from time to time),
In order that thou mightest
Recite it to men
At intervals: We have
Revealed it by stages.²³¹⁷

١٠٦-وَقُرْآنًا فَرَقْنَاهُ لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ
عَلَىٰ مَكْنٍ
وَأَنزَلْنَاهُ تَنْزِيلًا ۝

107. Say: "Whether ye believe
In it or not, it is true
That those who were given²³¹⁸
Knowledge beforehand, when
It is recited to them,
Fall down on their faces
In humble prostration,

١٠٧-قُلْ أُمُّؤْمِنِينَ أَوَّلًا ثُمَّ مَوْءُونَ
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِذَا
يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ
يَخْرُجُونَ لِلْذِّكْرِ سُبْحًا ۝

108. And say: "Glory
To our Lord! Truly
Has the promise of our Lord
Been fulfilled!"²³¹⁹

١٠٨-وَيَقُولُونَ سُبْحَنَ رَبِّنَا إِن
كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفْعُولًا ۝

2315. The Qur-ān was sent down by God in Truth: it was not forged by any mortal. It has descended in Truth: it was not and has not been falsified or corrupted in the process of being communicated to mankind.

2316. The part of the Prophet was that of a Messenger: he was not responsible if the ungodly rejected it. He fulfilled his mission in promulgating and explaining it and leaving it as a legacy to the world.

2317. The marvel is that these parts, revealed at different times and in different circumstances, should fit together so closely and consistently as they do. All revelation is progressive. The previous revelations were also progressive. Each of them marked a stage in the world's spiritual history. Man's mind does not take in more than his spiritual state will have prepared him for. God's revelation comes as a light to illuminate our difficulties and show us the way in actual situations that arise.

2318. No one's belief or unbelief affects the beauty or grandeur of God's revelation. But those endowed with spiritual knowledge or insight know at once when they hear God's holy Word, and fall down and adore God. Those endowed with knowledge include those who had received previous revelations and had kept themselves free from corrupt ideas.

2319. Those who had received previous revelations find in the Qur-ān and in the Apostle who brought it, the promise of God fulfilled. Those who were spiritually prepared for it found in the same way the satisfaction of their spiritual yearnings: to them, also, God's promise was seen to be fulfilled.

109. They fall down on their faces
In tears, and it increases
Their (earnest) humility.²³²⁰

110. Say: "Call upon God, or
Call upon Raḥmān:²³²¹
By whatever name ye call
Upon Him, (it is well):
For to Him belong
The Most Beautiful Names.²³²²
Neither speak thy Prayer aloud,
Nor speak it in a low tone,²³²³
But seek a middle course
Between."

111. Say: "Praise be to God,
Who begets no son,
And has no partner
In (His) dominion:
Nor (needs) He any
To protect Him from
humiliation:²³²⁴
Yea, magnify Him
For His greatness and glory!"

١٠٩- وَتَسْجُدُونَ لِلَّهِ قَانٍ يَبْكُونَ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ
خُشُوعًا ۝

١١٠- قُلْ اَدْعُوا اللَّهَ اَوْ اَدْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ
اَيَّا مَا تَدْعُو
فَلَهُ الْاَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ
وَلَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافُ بِهَا
وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ۝

١١١- وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ
وَلَدًا اَوْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِنَ الذَّلِيلِ
وَكَبِّرْهُ تَكْبِيرًا ۝

2320. A feeling of earnest humility comes to the man who realises how, in spite of his own unworthiness, he is brought, by God's Mercy, into touch with the most sublime Truths. Such a man is touched with the deepest emotion, which finds its outlet in tears.

2321. Cf. vii. 180. *Raḥmān* describes one of the attributes of God,—His Grace and Mercy which come to the sinner even before he feels conscious of the need of it,—the preventive Grace which saves God's servants from sin. See n. 19 to i. 1. God can be invoked, either by His simple name, which includes all attributes, or in the highest Sūfi philosophy, rises above all attributes, or by one of the names implying the attributes by which we try to explain His nature to our limited understanding. The attribute of Mercy in *Raḥmān* was particularly repugnant to the Pagan Arabs (see xxv. 60, and xxi. 36): that is why special stress is laid on it in the Qur-ān.

2322. These Beautiful Names of God are many. For *tasbeḥ* purposes a list of 99 is made out in *Ḥadīth* literature: that in Tirmīḥī is considered authoritative. Qāḍī Muḥammad Sulaimān has published an Urdu monograph on the subject, published by the Daftār Raḥmatun-lil-Ālamīn, Patiala, 1930. Those who wish to see a poetic Commentary on the names in the form of stories in English may consult Sir Edwin Arnold's *Pearls of the Faith*. Sir Edwin's stories are of unequal merit, but a fine example is furnished by No. 4, *al-Malik*, "The King".

2323. Cf. vii. 205. All prayer should be pronounced with earnestness and humility, whether it is congregational prayer or the private outpouring of one's own soul. Such an attitude is not consistent with an over-loud pronunciation of the words, though in public prayers the standard of permissible loudness is naturally higher than in the case of private prayer. In public prayers, of course, the *aḡān* or call to prayer will be in a loud voice to be heard near and far, but the chants from the Sacred Book should be neither so loud as to attract the hostile notice of those who do not believe nor so low in tone as not to be heard by the whole congregation.

2324. A first step towards the understanding of God's nature is to clear our mind from superstitions, such as that God begot a son, or that He has partners, or that He is dependent upon other beings to protect Him from harm and humiliation. We must realise that He is the One and Only Reality: His greatness and glory are above anything we can conceive: but using our highest spiritual ideas, we must declare forth His greatness and glory.

The Sūra began with singing the glory and praises of God: it ends on the same note, concluding the argument. The next Sūra takes up the same theme from another point of view, and opens with the same note, "Praise be to God".

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA XVIII (*Kahf*).

It has been explained in the Introduction to S. xvii how the five Sūras xvii to xxi develop the theme of the individual soul's spiritual history, and how they fit into the general scheme of exposition.

This particular Meccan Sūra may be called a lesson on the brevity and mystery of Life. First there is the story of the Companions of the Cave who slept therein for a long period, and yet thought they had been there only a day or less. Then there is the story of the mysterious Teacher who shows Moses how Life itself is a parable. And further there is the story of *Zul-qarnain*, the two-horned one, the powerful ruler of west and east, who made an iron wall to protect the weak against the strong. The parables refer to the brevity, uncertainty, and vanity of this life; to the many paradoxes in it, which can only be understood by patience and the fulness of knowledge; and to the need of guarding our spiritual gains against the incursions of evil.

Summary.

The Qur-ān is a direction and a warning. This life is brief and subject to vicissitudes. Our ideas of Time are defective, as shown in the story of the Companions of the Cave, who had faith, truth, patience, and other virtues. But their life was a mystery that can be fathomed but by few (xviii. 1-22, and C. 133).

Knowledge is for God: be on your guard against idle conjectures and cock-sure hopes. Learn from the Qur-ān. Parable of the man who is puffed up with this world's goods and is brought to nought (xviii. 23-44, and C. 134).

This life is uncertain and variable: goodness and virtue are better and more durable. For the Day of Reckoning will come, with its Mercy and its Wrath (xviii. 45-59, and C. 135).

Moses in his thirst for knowledge forgot his limitations. Patience and faith were enjoined on him, and he understood when the paradoxes of Life were explained (xviii. 60-82, and C. 136).

Zul-qarnain had a wide dominion: he punished the guilty and rewarded the good: he protected the weak from the lawless: but he had faith, and valued the guidance of God. God is One, and His service is righteousness (xviii. 83-110, and C. 137).

C. 133.—The Book of Revelation gives straight
(xviii. 1-22.) Directions to make our lives straight,—
To warn us against Evil and guide us
To the Good everlasting. Teach the Truth
But fret not about men rejecting it.
The Parable of the Companions of the Cave
Shows how God works wonders beyond
Our fathoming: how Faith is a sure
Refuge in ways we know not; how
Time itself works God's Plan
Before we know how it passes;
How He can give us rest, and raise
Us back to life against all odds;
And how futile it is to engage
In controversies about matters we know not.

Sūra XVIII.

Kahf, or the Cave.*In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

1. Praise be to God,²³²⁵
Who hath sent to His Servant
The Book, and hath allowed
Therein no Crookedness :²³²⁶
2. (He hath made it) Straight²³²⁷
(And Clear) in order that
He may warn (the godless)
Of a terrible Punishment
From Him, and that He
May give Glad Tidings
To the Believers who work
Righteous deeds, that they
Shall have a goodly Reward,
3. Wherein they shall
Remain for ever :²³²⁸
4. Further, that He may warn
Those (also) who say,



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

۱- الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ
الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا ۝

۲- قَيِّمًا لِيُنْذِرَ
بِأَسَاسَاتٍ لِمَنْ لَدُنْهُ
وَيُبَيِّنَ الْمُتُومِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ
الطَّيِّبَاتِ أَنْ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ حَسَنًا ۝

۳- مَا كُتِبَ فِيهِ آيَاتٌ ۝

۴- وَيُنْذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا

2325. See n. 2324 to xvii. 111. The theme of the last Sūra, that God is good and worthy of all praise from His creatures, to whom He has granted a clear revelation, is continued in this Sūra. The spirit of man makes gradual progress upwards, through the grace and mercy of God.

2326. Some people's idea of a Sacred Book is that it should be full of mysteries—dark corners, ambiguous expressions, words so far removed from human speech that they cover anything or nothing. Pagan oracles were couched in language which suggested one meaning to the hearer and claimed to have the very opposite meaning in the light of events which actually happened subsequently. They were distinctly crooked, not straight. In the next verse the word "Straight" (*qayyim*) is used to characterize the Qur-ān, in contrast to this word "crooked" (*i'waj*). See also xix. 36, n. 2488.

2327. *Qayyim*: straight, that which has no bends and no corners to mystify people, that which speaks clearly and unambiguously, that which guides to the right path. Cf. ix. 36, where the adjective is used for a straight usage, in contrast to usages which tend to mystify and deceive people. The Qur-ān is above all things straight, clear, and perspicuous. Its directions are plain for everyone to understand. Any book that deals with the highest mysteries of spiritual life must necessarily have portions whose full meaning is clearer to some minds than to others not so well prepared. But here there is nowhere any mystification, any desire to wrap up things in dark sayings repugnant to human reason. God's purpose is to give clear warning of spiritual dangers and lead up to the highest bliss.

2328. The "Reward" is not a material thing, or limited by time or space. It is a state of bliss. Cf. Milton's "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven" (P. L. i, 254-55).

"God hath begotten a son":²³²⁹

5. No knowledge have they
Of such a thing, nor
Had their fathers. It is
A grievous thing that issues
From their mouths as a saying,²³³⁰
What they say is nothing
But falsehood!
6. Thou wouldst only, perchance,
Fret thyself to death,
Following after them, in grief,²³³¹
If they believe not
In this Message.
7. That which is on earth
We have made but as
A glittering show for the earth,²³³²
In order that We may test
Them—as to which of them
Are best in conduct.
8. Verily what is on earth
We shall make but as

اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ۝

۵- مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ
كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ
إِنْ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا ۝

۶- فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ
إِنْ تَحْمِلُ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا ۝

۷- إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ
زِينَةً لَهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ
أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۝

۸- وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا

2329. The warning is not only needed for those who deny God or deny His Message, but also for those whose false ideas of God degrade religion in supposing that God begot a son, for God is One and is High above any ideas of physical reproduction.


2330. The attribution of a son "begotten" to God has no basis in fact or in reason. It is only a "word" or "saying" that issues out of their mouths. It is not even a dogma that is reasoned out or can be explained in any way that is consistent with the spiritual nature of God.

2331. In a reasonable world the preaching of a reasonable Faith like that of Islam would win universal acceptance. But the world is not altogether reasonable. It caused great distress to the unselfish Preacher of Islam that his Message met with so much opposition. He wanted to point the way to salvation. He only got, in the Meccan period, abuse from the chiefs of the Meccans—abuse and persecution, not only for himself but for the Truth which he was preaching. A heart less stout than his might have been appalled at what seemed the hopeless task of reclaiming the world from falsehood, superstition, selfishness, wrong, and oppression. He is here consoled, and told that he was not to fret himself to death; he was nobly doing his duty, and, as after-events showed, the seed of Truth was already germinating, although this was not visible at the time. Besides, these "chiefs" and "leaders" were only strutting in false plumes: their glory was soon to fade for ever.

2332. This world's goods—, worldly power, glory, wealth, position, and all that men scramble for,—are but a fleeting show. The possession or want of them does not betoken a man's real value or position in the spiritual world, the world which is to endure. Yet they have their uses. They test a man's sterling quality. He who becomes their slave loses rank in the spiritual world. He who uses them if he gets them, and does not fall into despair if he does not get them, shows his true mettle and quality. His conduct proclaims him.

Dust and dry soil
(Without growth or herbage).²³³³

صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا ٥

9.  Or dost thou reflect²³³⁴
That the Companions of the Cave²³³⁵
And of the Inscription²³³⁶
Were wonders among Our Signs?

٩- أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ
وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا ٥

10. Behold, the youths betook
themselves²³³⁷

١٠- إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ

2333. The fairest sights on the earth will become as dust and waste when this earth vanishes, and true spiritual values are restored.

2334. A wonderful story or allegory is now referred to. Its lessons are: (1) the relativity of Time, (2) the unreality of the position of oppressor and oppressed, persecutor and persecuted, on this earth, (3) the truth of the final Resurrection, when true values will be restored, and (4) the potency of Faith and Prayer to lead to the Right. Wonderful though such things may seem to be, they happen every day on God's earth!

2335. The unbelieving Quraish were in the habit of putting posers to the holy Prophet—questions which they got from Christians and Jews, which they thought the Prophet would be unable to answer. In this way they hoped to discredit him. One of these questions was about the floating Christian legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. The Prophet not only told them the main story but pointed out the variations that were current, and rebuked men for disputing about such details (xviii. 22). Most important of all, he treated the story (under inspiration) as a parable, pointing to spiritual lessons of the highest value. This is Revelation in the highest sense of the term. The story is recapitulated in n. 2337 below.

2336. *Raqīm*—Inscription. So interpreted by the Jalālain, and the majority of Commentators agree. See n. 2337, below. Others think it was the name of the dog; see xviii. 18, and n. 2350 below.

2337. The bare Christian story (without the spiritual lessons taught in the Qur-ān) is told in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (end of chapter 33). In the reign of a Roman Emperor who persecuted the Christians, seven Christian youths of Ephesus left the town and hid themselves in a cave in a mountain near by. They fell asleep, and remained asleep for some generations or centuries. When the wall which sealed up the cave was being demolished, the youths awoke. They still thought of the world in which they had previously lived. They had no idea of the duration of time. But when one of them went to the town to purchase provisions, he found that the whole world had changed. The Christian religion, instead of being persecuted was fashionable; in fact it was now the State religion. His dress and speech, and the money which he brought, seemed to belong to another world. This attracted attention. The great ones of the land visited the Cave, and verified the tale by questioning the man's Companions.

When the story became very popular and circulated throughout the Roman Empire, we may well suppose that an Inscription was put up at the mouth of the Cave. See verse 9 and n. 2336. This inscription was probably to be seen for many years afterwards, as Ephesus was a famous city on the west coast of Asia Minor, about forty to fifty miles south of Smyrna. Later on, the Khalifa Wāthiq (842-846 A.D.) sent an expedition to examine and identify the locality, as he did about the Zūl-Qarnain barrier in Central Asia (Appendix VII at the end of this Sūra).

A popular story circulating from mouth to mouth would necessarily be vague as to dates and vary very much in details. Somewhere about the 6th century A.D. a Syriac writer reduced it to writing. He suggested that the youths were seven in number; that they went to sleep in the reign of the Emperor Decius (who reigned from 249 to 251 A.D., and who was a violent persecutor of Christianity); and that they awoke in the reign of Theodosius II, who reigned from 408 to 450 A.D. In our literature Decius is known as Daqyanūs (from the adjectival Latin form Decianus), and the name stands as a symbol of injustice and oppression, and also of things old-fashioned and out-of-date, as *res Decianae* must have been two or three centuries after Decius.

To the Cave: they said,
 "Our Lord! bestow on us
 Mercy from Thyself,
 And dispose of our affair
 For us in the right way!" ²³³⁸

11. Then We draw (a veil) ²³³⁹
 Over their ears, for a number
 Of years, in the Cave,
 (So that they heard not):

12. Then We roused them, ²³⁴⁰
 In order to test which
 Of the two parties was best ²³⁴¹
 At calculating the term
 Of years they had tarried!

SECTION 2.

13. ~~We~~ We relate to thee their story
 In truth: they were youths
 Who believed in their Lord,
 And We advanced them
 In guidance: ²³⁴²

14. We gave strength to their
 hearts: ²³⁴³

إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا
 مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً
 وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا
 فَدَخَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَصْفَادَهُمْ
 فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ
 أَيُّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَى لِمَا لَمْ يَتْلُوا أَمَدًا

لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لِنَفْسٍ عَلَيْكَ تَبَاهُماً بِالْحَقِّ
 لِنُكْشِفَ غُضَبِي
 هُدًى

وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ

2338. The youths hid in the cave, but they trusted in God, and made over their whole case to Him in prayer. Then they apparently fell asleep, and knew nothing of what was happening in the world outside.

2339. *Drew (a veil) over their ears:* i.e. scaled their ears, so that they heard nothing. As they were in the Cave they saw nothing. So they were completely cut off from the outer world. It was as if they had died, with their knowledge and ideas remaining at the point of time when they had entered the Cave. It is as if a watch stops at the exact moment of some accident, and any one taking it up afterwards can precisely fix the time of the accident.

2340. *Roused them:* or raised them up from their sleep- or whatever condition they had fallen into (xviii. 18), so that they began to perceive the things around them, but only with the memories of the time at which they had ceased to be in touch with the world.

2341. When they awoke to consciousness, they had lost all count of time. Though they had all entered together, and lain together in the same place for the same length of time, their impressions of the time they had passed were quite different. Time is thus related to our own internal experiences. We have to learn the lesson that men as good as ourselves may yet differ as to their reactions to certain facts, and that in such matters disputes are unseemly. It is best to say, "God knows best" (xviii. 19).

2342. Their Faith carried them higher and higher on the road to Truth. Faith is cumulative. Each step leads higher and higher, by the grace and mercy of God.

2343. So that they were not afraid to speak out openly, and protest the truth of the Unity which they clearly saw in their own minds and hearts.

Behold, they stood up ²³⁴⁴
 And said: "Our Lord is
 The Lord of the heavens
 And of the earth: never
 Shall we call upon any god
 Other than Him: if we
 Did, we should indeed
 Have uttered an enormity!

15. "These our people have taken ²³⁴⁵
 For worship gods other
 Than Him: why do they
 Not bring forward an authority
 Clear (and convincing)
 For what they do?
 Who doth more wrong
 Than such as invent
 A falsehood against God?

16. "When ye turn away
 From them and the things
 They worship other than God,
 Betake yourselves to the Cave:
 Your Lord will shower
 His mercies on you
 And dispose of your affair
 Towards comfort and ease." ²³⁴⁶

17. How wouldst have seen
 The sun, when it rose,
 Declining to the right ²³⁴⁷
 From their Cave, and when

إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا
 رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَنْ
 نَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا لَقَدْ
 قُلْنَا إِذَا شَطَطًا ○

١٥- هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ
 إِلَهَةٍ
 لَوْلَا يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ بَيِّنٍ
 فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِنْهُمْ أَفْتَرَى
 عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ○

١٦- وَإِذْ اعْتَزَلْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا
 اللَّهَ فَإِذَا إِلَى الْكُهْنِ
 يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ
 وَيَهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَرْفَقًا ○

١٧- وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ
 تَرُورُ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا

2344. We may suppose them to have taken their stand and made a public protest before they betook themselves to the Cave (xviii. 16). The story really begins at xviii. 13, and the verses xviii. 9-12 may be considered as introductory. The emphasis is on spiritual lessons, the facts stated in the introductory part are passed over lightly in the story.

2345. Besides the heathen gods, the cult of the Emperors also became fashionable in the Roman Empire in the first three centuries of the Christian Era. The statue of Diana (Artemis) at Ephesus had been one of the wonders of the ancient world. The city was a great seaport and the capital of Roman Asia. We may therefore imagine how the heathen cults must have flourished there. St. Paul spent three years preaching there, and was mobbed and assaulted, and compelled to leave (Acts, xix. 1-41).

2346. That is, 'do not be afraid of anything: put your whole case in the hands of God: at present you are being persecuted; he will solve your difficulties and give you ease and comfort'. The public protest ends at verse 15. In verse 16 they are taking counsel among themselves. After they go into the Cave, verse 17 introduces us to the scene where they are lying in the midst of the Cave in tranquil confidence in God.

2347. In the latitude of Ephesus, 38° north, i.e. well above the sun's northern declination, a cave 'opening' to north; would never have the heat of the sun within it, as the sunny side would be the south. If the youths lay with their faces to the north, i.e. towards the entrance of the Cave, the sun would rise on their right side, declining to the south, and set on their left side, leaving them cool and comfortable.

It set, turning away
From them to the left,
While they lay in the open
Space in the midst
Of the Cave. Such are
Among the Signs of God :
He whom God guides²³⁴⁸
Is rightly guided ; but he
Whom God leaves to stray,---
For him wilt thou find
No protector to lead him
To the Right Way.

SECTION 3.

18. **Thou** wouldst have deemed²³⁴⁹
them
Awake, whilst they were asleep,
And We turned them
On their right and on
Their left sides: their dog²³⁵⁰
Stretching forth his two fore-legs
On the threshold: if thou
Hadst come up on to them,
Thou wouldst have certainly
Turned back from them in flight,
And wouldst certainly have been
Filled with terror of them.²³⁵¹
19. Such (being their state),
We raised them up (from sleep),
That they might question²³⁵²
Each other. Said one of them,

عَرَبَتْ تُغَرِّطُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ
وَهُمْ فِي نَجْوَى مَنَّةٍ
ذَلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ
وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَلَنْ يَجِدَ
لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْسِدًا ۝

وَنَحْنُ نَحْسِبُهُمْ كِنَافًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ
وَنُفَكُّهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ
وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ
أَوَاعَلَكُمُ عَلَيْهِمْ
لَوَكَيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا
وَلَكَلَكُمُ مِنْهُمْ رُجْعًا ۝

وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَا لَهُمْ نِسَاءً لَوَائِيَةً لَهُمْ
قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ

2348. The youths, having faith and trust in God, found safety and refuge in the Cave. They were protected from the persecution and violence of the heathen. Their prayer (xviii, 16) was heard.

2349. Perhaps their eyes were open, even though their senses were sealed in sleep. They turned about on their sides as men do in sleep.

2350. The name of their dog is traditionally known as Qitmir, but see n. 2336 above.

2351. This graphic picture of the sleepers explains the human mechanism by which their safety was ensured by God from their Pagan enemies.

2352. This is the point of the story. Their own human impressions were to be compared, each with the other. They were to be made to see that with the best goodwill and the most honest enquiry they might reach different conclusions; that they were not to waste their time in vain controversies, but to get on to the main business of life; and that God alone, had full knowledge of the things that seem to us so strange, or inconsistent, or inexplicable, or that produce different impressions on different minds. If they entered the Cave in the morning and woke up in the afternoon, one of them might well think they had been there only a few hours—only part of a day. This relative or fallacious impression of Time also gives us an inkling of the state when there will be no Time, of the Resurrection when all our little impressions of this life will be corrected by the final Reality. This mystery of Time has puzzled many contemplative minds. Cf. "Dark time that haunts us with the briefness of our days" (Thomas Wolfe in "Of Time and the River").

"How long have ye stayed (here)?"

They said, "We have stayed
(Perhaps) a day, or part
Of a day", (At length)
They (all) said, "God (alone)
Knows best how long
Ye have stayed here...
Now send ye then one of you
With this money of yours²³⁵³
To the town: let him
Find out which is the best²³⁵⁴
Food (to be had) and bring some
To you, that (ye may)
Satisfy your hunger therewith:
And let him behave
With gentleness and courtesy,
And let him not inform
Anyone about you.

20. "For if they should
Come upon you, they would
Stone you or force you²³⁵⁵
To return to their cult,
And in that case ye would
Never attain prosperity."²³⁵⁶

21. Thus²³⁵⁷ did We make
Their case known to the people,

كَمْ لَيْسْتُمْ
قَالُوا لَيْسْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ
قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَيْسْتُمْ
فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ
إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى
طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِشْقٍ مِنْهُ
وَلْيَكَلِّفْ
وَلَا يَشْعُرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا ○

٢٠- إِنْهُمْ إِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ
يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي مِلَّتِهِمْ
وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوا إِذَا أَبَدًا ○

٢١- وَكَذَلِكَ أَخْذَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ

2353. They now give up barren controversy and come to the practical business of life. But their thoughts are conditioned by the state of things that existed when they entered the Cave. The money they carried was the money coined in the reign of the monarch who persecuted the Religion of Unity and favoured the false cults of Paganism.

2354. *Best food*: i.e., purest, most wholesome, perhaps also most suitable for those who rejected idol worship, i.e., not dedicated to idols. For they still imagined the world in the same state in which they had known it before they entered the Cave.

2355. They think that the world had not changed, and that the fierce persecution they knew was still raging, under which a man had to pay by his life for his religious faith, if he could not conform to Pagan worship.

2356. That is, never reap the spiritual good which your knowledge, instruction, and experience entitle you to attain. To become a renegade, to give up the Truth which you have won, simply on account of the fear of men, is the most despicable form of cowardice, and would rightly close the door of salvation if strict justice were to be done. But even then God's Mercy comes to the coward's aid so long as the door of repentance is open.

2357. Thus: in this way, by these means, i.e., by the sending out of one of the Sleepers with the old money to the town to buy provisions. His old-fashioned dress, appearance, and speech, and the old uncurrent money which he brought, at once drew the attention of people to him. When they learnt his story, they realised that God, Who can protect His servants thus and raise them up from sleep after such a long time, has power to raise up men for the Resurrection, and that His promise of goodness and mercy to those who serve Him is true and was exemplified in this striking way. On the other hand, to the men of the Cave themselves, it became clear that God can change the situation before we are aware, and our hope in Him is not futile, and that even when we are on the brink of despair, a revolution is surely working in the world before the world itself realises it.

That they might know
That the promise of God
Is true, and that there can
Be no doubt about the Hour
Of Judgment. Behold,
They dispute among

themselves²³⁵⁸
As to their affair. (Some) said,
"Construct a building over them":
Their Lord knows best
About them: those who prevailed
Over their affair said,
"Let us surely build a place
Of worship over them."

22. (Some) say they were three,
The dog being the fourth
Among them; (others) say
They were five, the dog
Being the sixth,—doubtfully
Guessing at the unknown;²³⁵⁹
(Yet others) say they were
Seven, the dog being the eighth.
Say thou: "My Lord
Knoweth best their number;
It is but few that know²³⁶⁰
Their (real case)". Enter not,
Therefore, into controversies
Concerning them, except
On a matter that is clear²³⁶¹
Nor consult any of them
About (the affair of) the
Sleepers.²³⁶²

يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ
حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا
إِذْ يَتَنَادَوْنَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرُهُمْ فَقَالُوا
ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِمْ بُنْيَانًا
رَبُّهُمْ أَعْتَمَهُمْ وَإِذْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ عَلَيْهِمُ
عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِمْ
لَنَنْجِيَنَّهُمْ مِنصِبًا ۝

۲۲- سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَّابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ
وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ
وَنَحْنُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ
وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ
قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعَدَّتِهِمْ
مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ۖ
فَلَا تُسَارِفِيهِمْ
إِلَّا مِرَّةً ظَاهِرًا
وَلَا تُتَفَتِفِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ۝

2358. The perversity of man is such that as soon as ever a glimpse of truth becomes manifest, men fall into controversies about it. The Sleepers could not judge about the duration of their stay in the Cave, but they wisely left the matter and attended to the urgent business of their lives. The towns-folk could not agree as to the significance of the event: they fell to discussing immaterial details. What sort of a memorial should they raise?—a house or a place of worship or a tablet? The place of worship was built. But the real significance of the spiritual meaning was missed until explained in the Qur-ān.

2359. The controversy in after ages raged about the number of the Sleepers: were they three or five or seven? People answered, not from knowledge, but from conjecture. Gibbon's version, which has now become best known, makes the number of Sleepers seven. The point was immaterial: the real point was the spiritual lesson.

2360. The true significance of the story is known only to a few. Most men discuss futile details, which are not in their knowledge.

2361. It is unprofitable to enter such immaterial controversies and many others that have been waged about Religion by shallow men from time immemorial. Yet, if there is a matter of clear knowledge from experience that matters, we must openly proclaim it, that the world may be brought to listen to God's Truth.

2362. Vulgar story-mongers as such know little of the true significance of stories and parables. We have a clear exposition in the Qur-ān. What need is there to go into details of the number of men in the Cave, or of the time they remained there?

- C. 134.—True knowledge is with God alone.
(xviii. 23-44.) We are not to dispute on matters
Of conjecture, but to rely on the Truth
That comes from God. As in the Parable,
The man who piles up wealth
And is puffed up with this world's goods,
Despising those otherwise endowed,
Will come to an evil end,
For his hopes were not built on God.

SECTION 4.

23. ~~For~~ say of anything,
"I shall be sure to do
So and so to-morrow"—
24. Without adding, "So please
God!"²³⁶³
And call thy Lord to mind
When thou forgettest, and say,
"I hope that my Lord
Will guide me ever closer
(Even) than this
To the right road."²³⁶⁴
25. ~~So~~ they stayed in their Cave
Three hundred years, and (some)
Add nine (more).²³⁶⁵

۲۳- وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ
لَّيٌّ فَإِنِّي لَا أَفَعَلُ ذَلِكَ غَدًا ۝

۲۴- إِنْ أَكَّ أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ
إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِي رَبِّي
لَأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَذَا ارْتِدَاءً ۝

۲۵- وَلَيَسْئَلُنِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ
سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعًا ۝

2363. Verses 23 and 24 are parenthetical. We must never rely upon our own resources so much as to forget God. If by any chance we do forget, we must come back to Him and keep Him in remembrance, as did the Companions of the Cave.

2364. In geometry the perfect circle is an ideal. Any given circle that we draw is not so perfect that we cannot draw one closer to the ideal. So in our life, there is always the hope of drawing closer and closer to God.

2365. This verse should be read with the next verse. In the floating oral tradition the duration of time in the Cave was given differently in different versions. When the tradition was reduced to writing, some Christian writers (*s.g.*, Simeon Metaphrastes) named 372 years, some less. In round numbers 300 years in the solar Calendar would amount to 309 in the lunar Calendar. But the next verse points out that all these are mere conjectures: the number is known to God alone.

The authority on which Gibbon relies mentions two definite reigns, that of Decius (249-251 A.D.) and that of Theodosius II (408-450 A.D.). Taking 250 and 450, we get an interval of 200 years. But the point of the story does not lie in the name of any given Emperor, but in the fact, that the beginning of the period coincided with an Emperor who persecuted: the Emperor's name at the end of the period may be taken as approximately correct, because the story was recorded within two generations afterwards. One of the worst Emperors to persecute the Christians was Nero who reigned from 54 to 68. If we took the end of his reign (A.D. 68) as the initial point, and (say) 440 A.D. as the final point, we get the 372 years of Simeon Metaphrastes. But none of these writers knew any more than we do. Our best course is to follow the Quranic injunction, "Say, God knows best how long they stayed" (xviii. 26). There is also a rebuke implied: 'do not imitate these men who love mischievous controversies!' After all, we are given the narrative more as a parable than as a story.

26. Say: "God knows best
How long they stayed:
With Him is (the knowledge
Of) the secrets of the heavens
And the earth: how clearly
He sees, how finely He hears
(Everything)! They have no
protector²³⁶⁶
Other than Him; nor does
He share His Command²³⁶⁷
With any person whatsoever."

27. And recite (and teach)
What has been revealed
To thee of the Book
Of thy Lord: none
Can change His Words,²³⁶⁸
And none wilt thou find
As a refuge other than Him.

28. And keep thy soul content
With those who call
On their Lord morning
And evening, seeking²³⁶⁹
His Face; and let not
Thine eyes pass beyond them,
Seeking the pomp and glitter
Of this Life; nor obey
Any whose heart We
Have permitted to neglect
The remembrance of Us,
One who follows his own

٢٦- قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَيْسُوا
لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
أَجْمَعِينَ
مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ
وَلَا يُشِيرُكَ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا ۝

٢٧- وَأَنْتَ مَا أَوْحَى
إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ
لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ
وَلَنْ يَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ۝

٢٨- وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ
رَبَّهُمْ بِالْقُدُورِ وَالْعَاصِرِ
يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَقْدُ عَيْنُكَ عَنْهُمْ
تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الدُّنْيَا
وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ
عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ

2366. Who are "they" in this sentence? They may be the Companions of the Cave, for they put themselves under the protection of God, and disowned all attribution of partners to Him. Or "they" may refer to the people in general who go wrong and become "Mushriks", i.e., attribute imaginary partners to God.

2367. In His Command: i.e., in God's government of the world, or in His Judgment on the Day of Judgment.

2368. His Words: His Commands, Decrees, Orders.

2369. Cf. vi. 52, and n. 870. The true servants of God are those whose hearts are turned to Him morning, noon, and night, and who seek not worldly gain, but God's Grace, God's own Self, His Presence and nearness. "Face" is the symbol of Personality or Self. Even if they are poor in this world's goods, their society gives far more inward and spiritual satisfaction than worldly grandeur or worldly attractions.

Desires, whose case has
Gone beyond all bounds.²³⁷⁰

29. Say, "The Truth is
From your Lord":
Let him who will,
Believe, and let him
Who will, reject (it):²³⁷¹
For the wrong-doers We
Have prepared a Fire
Whose (smoke and flames),
Like the walls and roof
Of a tent will hem
Them in: if they implore
Relief they will be granted
Water like melted brass,
That will scald their faces.
How dreadful the drink!
How uncomfortable a couch
To recline on!

30. As to those who believe
And work righteousness,
Verily We shall not suffer
To perish the reward
Of any who do
A (single) righteous deed.²³⁷²

31. For them will be Gardens
Of Eternity; beneath them
Rivers will flow: they will
Be adorned therein
With bracelets of gold,
And they will wear

هُوْلُهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ قُرْبَانًا

٢٩- وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
مَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمَرْ
وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفَرْ
إِنَّا آخِذُونَ بِالظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا
أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا
وَأَنْ يَسْتَغِيثُوا يُغَاثُوا
بِمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ
بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ
وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَقَقًا

٣٠- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ
مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا

٣١- أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ
يَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا
مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَيَكْبَسُونَ

2370. For those who stray from God's path, God's Grace is ever anxious: it seeks to reclaim them and bring them back to the path. If such a one resists, and follows his own lusts, a point is reached when his case becomes hopeless. God's Grace does not then reach him, and he is abandoned to his pride and insolence. Beware of following the example or advice of such a one or seeking his society, or hankering after his wretched idols.

2371. Our choice in our limited Free-will involves a corresponding personal responsibility. We are offered the Truth: again and again is it pressed on our attention. If we reject it, we must take all the terrible consequences which are prefigured in the Fire of Hell. Its flames and roof will completely enclose us like a tent. Ordinarily there is water to quench the heat of thirst: here the only drink will be like molten brass, thick, heavy, burning, sizzling. Before it reaches the mouth of the unfortunates, drops of it will scald their faces as it is poured out.

2372. The righteous will be rewarded, as has been said again and again, beyond their merits. Not a single good deed of theirs will lose its reward, and the mercy of God will blot out their sins.

Green garments ²³⁷³ of fine silk
And heavy brocade;
They will recline therein
On raised thrones.
How good the recompense!
How beautiful a couch
To recline on! ²³⁷⁴

ثِيَابًا خَضْرَاءَ مِنْ سُندُسٍ وَاسْتَبْرَقٍ
مُتَّكِئِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ
نَعْمَ الثَّوَابُ
وَحَسَنَتِ مَرْتَفَعُهُ

SECTION 5.

32. Set forth to them
The parable of two men:
For one of them We provided
Two gardens of grape-vines
And surrounded them
With date palms;
In between the two
We placed corn-fields. ²³⁷⁵

۳۲- وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ
جَعَلْنَا لَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَغْنَابٍ
وَخَفَقَةً مِمَّا يَخِيلُ
وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا مِزْعَانِ

33. Each of those gardens
Brought forth its produce,
And failed not in the least
Therein: in the midst
Of them We caused
A river to flow.

۳۳- كُلًّا أَجْتَعَيْنِ أَتَتْ أَكْلَهَا
وَلَمْ تَنْظِمِ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا
وَفُتِحْنَا خِلَالَهُمَا نَهْرًا

34. (Abundant) was the produce
This man had: he said
To his companion, in the course
Of a mutual argument:
"More wealth have I
Than you, and more honour
And power in (my following
Of) men." ²³⁷⁶

۳۴- وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ
لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَادِّثُهُ
أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا
وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا

2373. Heaven is figured by all the pictures of ease and comfort which we can imagine in our present state: Gardens; perpetual springs of crystal water, which we can see as in a landscape from above; the finest and most costly ornaments; the most beautiful clothes to wear; green is the colour mentioned, because it is the most refreshing to the eye, and fits in well with the Garden; the wearer takes the choice of fine silk or heavy brocade; and for rest and comfort, high thrones of dignity on which the blessed ones recline.

2374. This picture is in parallel contrast to the picture of Misery in the last verse.

2375. Here is a simple parable of the contrast between two men. One was purse-proud, and forgot that what he had was from God, by way of a trust and a trial in this life. The other boasted of nothing: his trust was in God. The worldly wealth of the first was destroyed, and he had nothing left. The second was the happier in the end.

2376. The two men began to compare notes. The arrogant one was puffed up with his possessions, his income, and his large family and following, and thought in his self-complacency that it would last for ever. He was also wrong in looking down on his Companion, who, though less affluent, was the better man of the two.

35. He went into his garden
In a state (of mind)
Unjust to his soul :²³⁷⁷
He said, "I deem not
That this will ever perish,

36. "Nor do I deem
That the Hour (of Judgment)
Will (ever) come:
Even if I am brought back
To my Lord, I shall
Surely find (there)
Something better in exchange."²³⁷⁸

37. His companion said to him,
In the course of the argument
With him: "Dost thou deny
Him Who created thee
Out of dust, then out of
A sperm-drop, then fashioned
Thee into a man?"²³⁷⁹

38. "But (I think) for my part
That He is God,
My Lord, and none shall I
Associate with my Lord.

39. "Why didst thou not,
As thou wentest into
Thy garden, say: 'God's Will
(Be done)! There is no power
But with God!' If thou²³⁸⁰

٣٥-وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ
قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَنْ يَمِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا ۝

٣٦-وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً
وَلَكِنْ تُرَدُّنِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّي
لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا ۝

٣٧-قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ
أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ
ثُمَّ مِنْ
ثُطْغَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ رَجُلًا ۝

٣٨-لَكِنَّا هُوَ اللَّهُ
رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ رَبِّي أَحَدًا ۝

٣٩-وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا
شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ

2377. It was not wealth that ruined him, but the attitude of his mind. He was unjust, not so much to his neighbour, as to his own soul. In his love of the material, he forgot or openly defied the spiritual. As verse 37 shows, he took his companion with him, to impress him with his own importance, but the companion was unmoved.

2378. Here comes out the grasping spirit of the materialist. In his mind "better" means more wealth and more power, of the kind he was enjoying in this life, although in reality, even what he had, rested on hollow foundations and was doomed to perish and bring him down with it.

2379. The three stages of man's creation: first dust, or clay, itself created out of nothing, and forming the physical basis of his body; then, out of the produce of the earth as incorporated in the parents' body, the sperm-drop (with the corresponding receptive element); and then when the different elements were mixed in due proportion, and the soul was breathed into him, the fashioned man, Cf. lxxxvii, 2, and xv. 28-29.

2380. The companion's argument divides itself into five parts. (1) He remonstrates against the proud man denying God. (2) He, from his own spiritual experience, proclaims that God is One and that He is good. (3) He points out to him the better way of enjoying God's gifts with gratitude to Him. (4) He expresses contentment and satisfaction in God's dealings with him. (5) He gives a warning of the fleeting nature of this world's goods and the certainty of God's punishment for inordinate vanity.

Dost see me less than
Thee in wealth and sons,

40. "It may be that my Lord
Will give me something
Better than thy garden,
And that He will send
On thy garden thunderbolts
(By way of reckoning)
From heaven, making it
(But) slippery sand!—

41. "Or the water of the garden
Will run off underground
So that thou wilt never
Be able to find it." ²³⁸¹

42. So his fruits (and enjoyment)
Were encompassed (with ruin),
And he remained twisting
And turning his hands
Over what he had spent ²³⁸²
On his property, which had
(Now) tumbled to pieces
To its very foundations,
And he could only say,
"Woe is me! Would I had
Never ascribed partners
To my Lord and Cherisher!" ²³⁸³

43. Nor had he numbers
To help him against God,
Nor was he able
To deliver himself. ²³⁸⁴

تَرَى أَنَا أَقَلَّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا ۝

۴۰- قَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يُوَفِّيَن
خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ
عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا ۝

۴۱- أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَاءً خَوْرًا
فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا ۝

۴۲- وَأَحْصِط بِمُثَرِّ
فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ
عَلَىٰ مَا اتَّفَقَ فِيهَا
وَهُنَّ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا
وَيَقُولُ لِيَأْتِنِي
لَمْ أَشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ۝

۴۳- وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ فِئَةٌ يَنْصُرُوهُ مِنَ
دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنتَصِرًا ۝

2381. The punishment was that of thunderbolts (*ḥusḥān*), but the general meaning of the word includes any punishment by way of a reckoning (*ḥisāb*), and I think that an earthquake is also implied, as it alters water-courses, diverts channels underground, throws up silt and sand, and covers large areas with ruin, as happened in the Bihar earthquake of 1934.

2382. "Fruits", "spent", "twisting of the hands", should all be understood in a wide metaphorical sense, as well as the literal sense. He had great income and satisfaction, which were all gone. What resources he had lavished on his property! His thoughts had been engrossed on it; his hopes had been built on it; it had become the absorbing passion of his life. If he had only looked to God, instead of to the ephemeral goods of this world!

2383. In this case, in his mind, there was his own Self and his Mammon as rivals to God!

2384. He had built up connections and obliged dependants, and was proud of having his "quiver full". But where were all things when the reckoning came? He could not help himself; how could others be expected to help him?

44. There, the (only) protection comes
From God, the True One.
He is the Best to reward,
And the Best to give success.²³⁸⁵

٢٣٨٥ - مَنَّالِكَ الْوَلَايَةِ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ
هُوَ خَيْرُ ثَوَابٍ وَخَيْرُ عُقْبَانٍ

C. 135.—The life of this world is ephemeral,
(xviii. 45-59.) And its gains will not last. Good Deeds
Are the best of possessions in God's sight:
All will be levelled up on the Day
Of Judgment, and a new Order created
On the basis of Truth, according to the Book
Of Deeds. Pride is the root of Evil,
Rebellion, and wrong. Who will choose
Evil ones in preference to God? Let us accept
Truth, for though Falsehood may flourish
For a time, it must perish in the end.

SECTION 6.

45. Set forth to them
The similitude of the life
Of this world: it is like
The rain which We send
Down from the skies:
The earth's vegetation absorbs it,
But soon it becomes
Dry stubble, which the winds²³⁸⁶
Do scatter: it is (only) God
Who prevails over all things.

٢٣٨٦ - وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ
فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَّاحُ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُقْتَدِرًا

46. Wealth and sons are allurements
Of the life of this world:
But the things that endure,
Good Deeds, are best
In the sight of thy Lord,
As rewards, and best
As (the foundation for) hopes.²³⁸⁷

٢٣٨٧ - الْأَمْوَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَالْبَقِيَّةُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ
عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا

2385. All else is vanity, uncertainty, the sport of Time. The only hope or truth is from God. Other rewards and other successes are illusory: the best Reward and the best Success come from God.

2386. Rain-water is a good thing in itself, but it does not last, and you can build no solid foundations on it. It is soon absorbed in the earth, and produces the flourishing appearance of grass and vegetation—for a time. Soon these decay, and become as dry stubble, which the least wind from any quarter will blow about like a thing of no importance. The water is gone, and so is the vegetation to which it lent a brave show of luxuriance temporarily. Such is the life of this world, contrasted with the inner and real Life, which looks to the Hereafter. God is the only enduring Power we can look to, supreme over all.

2387. Other things are fleeting: but Good Deeds have a lasting value in the sight of God. They are best as (or for) rewards in two ways: (1) they flow from us by the Grace of God, and are themselves rewards for our Faith; (2) they become the foundation of our hopes for the highest spiritual rewards in the Hereafter.

47. One Day We shall
Remove the mountains, and thou
Wilt see the earth
As a level stretch,²³⁸⁸
And We shall gather them,
All together, nor shall We
Leave out any one of them.

٢٣٨٠ وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَ
تَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً
وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ۝

48. And they will be marshalled
Before thy Lord in ranks,
(With the announcement),
"Now have ye come to Us
(Bare) as We created you²³⁸⁹
First: aye, ye thought
We shall not fulfil
The appointment made to you
To meet (Us)!"²³⁹⁰

٢٣٨١ وَعَرَّضُوا عَلَى رَبِّكَ صَفًّا
لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ
أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ
أَلَّنْ نَجْعَلَ لَكُم مَّوْعِدًا ۝

49. And the Book (of Deeds)
Will be placed (before you);
And thou wilt see
The sinful in great terror
Because of what is (recorded)
Therein; they will say,
"Ah! woe to us!
What a book is this!
It leaves out nothing
Small or great, but
Takes account thereof!"
They will find all that they
Did, placed before them:
And not one will thy Lord
Treat with injustice.²³⁹¹

٢٣٩٠ وَوَضَعْنَا الْكِتَابَ
فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ
مَتَّافِينَ وَيَقُولُونَ يَوَيْلَتَنَا
مَا لَ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ
صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً
إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا
وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا
وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ۝

2388. On the Day of Judgment none of our present landmarks will remain.

2389. We shall stand as we were created, with none of the adventitious possessions that we collected in this life, which will all have vanished.

2390. The sceptics will now at length be convinced of the Reality which will be upon them.

2391. Personal responsibility, for all deeds in this life will then be enforced. But it will be done with perfect justice. Expressed in the forms of this world, it will amount to a clear statement of all we did in this life: the record will be put before us to convince us. As it will be a perfect record, with no omissions and no wrong entries, it will be perfectly convincing. Where there is punishment, it has been earned by the wrong-doer's own deeds, not imposed on him unjustly.

SECTION 7.

50. Behold! We said
To the angels, "Bow down²³⁹²
To Adam": they bowed down
Except Iblis. He was
One of the Jinns,²³⁹³ and he
Broke the Command
Of his Lord.
Will ye then take him
And his progeny²³⁹⁴ as protectors
Rather than Me? And they
Are enemies to you!
Evil would be the exchange²³⁹⁵
For the wrong-doers!

51. I called them not
To witness the creation
Of the heavens and the earth,
Nor (even) their own creation:
Nor is it for Me
To take as helpers
Such as lead (men) astray!²³⁹⁶

52. One Day He will say,
"Call on those whom ye
Thought to be My partners,"
And they will call on them,
But they will not listen
To them; and We shall
Make for them a place
Of common perdition.²³⁹⁷

٥٠- وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا
لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ
مِنَ الْإِنِّسِ فَفُتِّقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ
أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْهُ وَكًّا وَدُرِّيَّةً أُولِيَاءَ
مَنْ دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ
يَبْغِي لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا ۝

٥١- مَا أَشْهَدُ لَهُمْ خَلْقَ
الْسَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
وَمَا كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا ۝

٥٢- وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا
شُرَكَاءِيَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ
فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ
وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَوْبِقًا ۝

2392. Cf. ii. 34, where the story is told of the fall of mankind through Adam. Here the point is referred to in order to bring home the individual responsibility of the erring soul. 'Iblis is your enemy; you have been told his history; will you prefer to go to him rather than to the merciful God, your Creator and Cherisher? What a false exchange you would make!'

2393. Cf. vi. 100, n. 929.

2394. *Satan's progeny*: we need not take the epithet literally. All his followers are his progeny: even the evil thoughts born in man out of Satan's influence are Satan's progeny.

2395. Out of the limited free-will that man has, if he were to choose Evil instead of Good, Satan instead of God, what a dreadful choice it would be! It would really be an evil exchange. For man is God's creature, cared for and cherished by Him. He abandons his Cherisher to become the slave of his enemy!

2396. God wants man's good: how can He take Evil for His partner?

2397. Some Commentators construe: "And We shall make a partition between them": i.e., the Evil ones will not even be seen by their misguided followers, much as the latter may go on calling on them.

53. And the Sinful shall see
The Fire and apprehend
That they have to fall
Therein : no means will they
Find to turn away therefrom.

SECTION 8.

54. ~~We~~ We have explained
In detail in this Qur-an,
For the benefit of mankind,
Every kind of similitude :
But man is, in most things, ²³⁹⁸
Contentious.
55. And what is there
To keep back men
From believing, now that
Guidance has come to them,
Nor from praying for forgiveness
From their Lord, but that
(They ask that) the ways
Of the ancients be repeated ²³⁹⁹
With them, or the Wrath
Be brought to them
Face to face ?
56. We only send the apostles
To give glad tidings
And to give warnings : ²⁴⁰⁰
But the Unbelievers dispute
With vain argument, in order
Therewith to weaken the truth,
And they treat My Signs
As a jest, as also the fact
That they are warned !

٥٣- وَرَأَى الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ
مُؤَاقِعُهَا
وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا ۝

٥٤- وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ
لِلنَّاسِ مِن كُلِّ مَثَلٍ
وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا ۝

٥٥- وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ
يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَى
وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ
تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةُ الْأَوَّلِينَ
أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا ۝

٥٦- وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ
وَمُنذِرِينَ ۚ وَيُجَادِلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ
وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي
وَمَا أَنْذَرُوا هُزُوًا ۝

2398 If men had not cultivated the habit of contention and obstinacy, they would have found that the parables and similitudes of Scripture had fully met their difficulties, and they would gladly have obeyed the call of God.

2399. But man's obstinacy and contrariness asks or calls for a repetition of what happened to the wicked and those who rejected Faith in ancient times. Out of curiosity, or by way of challenge, they seem to court the Punishment and ask that it be brought to pass at once. But it will come soon enough, and then they will think it too early ! Cf. xiii 6 and n. 1810.

2400. The men of God are not sent to humour us with dialectics or satisfy the vulgar curiosity for miracles or dark unusual things. There is no "crookedness" (xviii. 1) in their preaching. They come to preach the Truth,—not in an abstract way, but with special reference to our conduct. They give us the good news of salvation lest we despair in the presence of Sin, and to warn us clearly of the dangers of Evil. Vain controversies about words only weaken their mission, or turn it into ridicule. The ungodly have a trick also of treating the earnest preaching to them itself as a jest and ridiculing it.

57. And who doth more wrong
Than one who is reminded
Of the Signs of his Lord,
But turns away from them,
Forgetting the (deeds) which his
hands ²⁴⁰¹

Have sent forth? Verily We
Have set veils over their hearts
Lest they should understand this,
And over their ears, deafness.
If thou callest them
To guidance, even then
Will they never accept guidance.

58. But your Lord is Most Forgiving,
Full of Mercy. If He were
To call them (at once) to account
For what they have earned,
Then surely He would
Have hastened their Punishment:
But they have their appointed
Time, beyond which ²⁴⁰² they
Will find no refuge.

59. Such were the populations
We destroyed when they
Committed iniquities; but
We fixed an appointed time
For their destruction. ²⁴⁰³

هـ- وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ
بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا
وَلَيْسَ مَا قَدْ مَتَّ يَدُهُ
إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ
كَفَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا
وَأَنْ تَذْ عِلْمُهُ إِلَى الْهَدَى
فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا وَإِذَا أَجَدًا ○

هـ- وَرَبُّكَ الْعَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ
يُؤْخَذُ هُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَجَلَّ لَيْلُ الْعَذَابِ
بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ
مَوْجِلًا ○

هـ- وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَى أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ لَمَّا
ظَلَمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَكْفُرُ مَوْعِدًا ○

C. 136.—Moses was up against mysteries
(xviii. 60-82.) Which he wanted to explore. He searched
Out a man endued with knowledge
Derived from the divine springs from which
Flow the paradoxes of life. He is shown
Three such paradoxes and how human

2401. Considering the power of sin, and how it gets hold of the hearts of men, and considering all the wrongs that men have done, it is the height of folly and injustice on their part to turn away from warnings which are given expressly for their good. But a stage of callousness is reached, when, by their own choice, they have rendered themselves impervious to God's Grace. At that stage a veil is put over their hearts and they are left alone for a time, that they may commune with themselves and perhaps repent and seek God's Mercy again. If they do not, it is their own loss. See next verse.

2402. *Min dāni-hi*: should we take the pronoun to refer to "the appointed time," or to "your Lord," mentioned at the beginning of the verse? Most Commentators take the former view, and I have translated accordingly. But I agree with those who take the latter view, and the better translation would be: "But they have their appointed time, and except with God, they will find no refuge." That means that even during the period allowed them, when they are left to wander astray as they have rejected God's Grace, God's Mercy is open to them if they will repent and return; but nothing but God's Mercy can save them.

2403. The instances of exemplary Punishment in former times were also subject to this rule, that God gives plenty of rope to the wicked, in case they might turn, repent, and obtain His Mercy.

Impatience is inconsistent with their true
Understanding. The highest knowledge
Comes not except by divine gift,
And a constant, patient striving,
With Faith, to apprehend something
Of the purpose of the All-Wise God.

SECTION 9.

60. Behold, Moses said²⁴⁰⁴
To his attendant, "I will not
Give up until I reach
The junction of the two²⁴⁰⁵
Seas or (until) I spend
Years and years in travel."²⁴⁰⁶

٦-وَرَأَى قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَائِهِ لَا
أَبْرُحُ حَتَّى أَبْلُغَ جَمْعَةَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ
أَمْضِيَ حَقْبًا ○

61. But when they reached
The Junction²⁴⁰⁷, they forgot
(About) their Fish,²⁴⁰⁸ which took
Its course through the sea
(Straight) as in a tunnel.

١١-فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا جَمْعَهُ بَيْنَهُمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا
فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا ○

2404. This episode in the story of Moses is meant to illustrate four points. (1) Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Even so that wisdom did not comprehend everything, even as the whole stock of the knowledge of the present day, in the sciences and the arts, and in literature, (if it could be supposed to be gathered in one individual), does not include all knowledge. Divine knowledge, as far as man is concerned, is unlimited. Even after Moses received his divine mission of Apostleship, his knowledge was not so perfect that it could not receive further additions. (2) Constant effort is necessary to keep our knowledge square with the march of time, and such effort Moses is shown to be making. (3) The mysterious man he meets (xviii. 65 and n. 2411), to whom Tradition assigns the name of *Khiḍḍr* (literally, Green), is the type of that knowledge which is ever green, fresh, and flourishing, ever in contact with life as it is actually lived, and not merely crystallised in books or second-hand sayings. The second kind of knowledge has its uses, but is only a stepping-stone to the first kind of knowledge, which is true knowledge and which is from God direct (xviii. 65). (4) There are paradoxes in life; apparent loss may be real gain; apparent cruelty may be real mercy; returning good for evil may really be justice and not generosity (xviii. 79-82). God's wisdom transcends all human calculation.

2405. The most probable geographical location, if any is required in a story that is a parable) is where the two arms of the Red Sea join together, *viz.* the Gulf of 'Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez. They enclose the Sinai Peninsula, in which Moses and the Israelites spent many years in their wanderings. There is also authority (see Baiḍhāwī's note) for interpreting the two seas as the two great streams of knowledge, which were to meet in the persons of Moses and *Khiḍḍr*.

2406. *Huqub* means a long but indefinite space of time. Sometimes it is limited to 80 years.

2407. Literally, 'the Junction of (the space) between the two,' *i.e.*, the point at which the two seas were united.

2408. Moses was to go and find a servant of God, who would instruct him in such knowledge as he had not already got. He was to take a fish with him. The place where he was to meet his mysterious Teacher would be indicated by the fact that the fish would disappear when he got to that place. The fish is the emblem of the fruit of secular knowledge, which merges itself in divine knowledge at the point where human intelligence is ready for the junction of the two. But the mere merger of secular knowledge does not in itself produce divine knowledge. The latter has to be sought patiently.

62. When they had passed on
(Some distance), Moses said
To his attendant: "Bring us
Our early meal; truly
We have suffered much fatigue²⁴⁰⁹
At this (stage of) our journey."

٦٢- فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ
لِقَتْنِهِ اِتِنَا عَدَاؤَنَا لَقَدْ
لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا اَنْصَبًا ۝

63. He replied: "Sawest thou
(What happened) when we
Betook ourselves to the rock?
I did indeed forget
(About) the Fish: none but
Satan made me forget
To tell (you) about it:²⁴¹⁰
It took its course through
The sea in a marvellous way!"

٦٣- قَالَ اَرَمَيْتَ اِذْ اَوْرَيْنَا
اِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَاِنِ نَسِيتَ الْحُوتَ
وَمَا اَنْشَيْنَاهُ اِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ اَنْ اَذْكُرَهُ
وَالْحَمْدُ سَبِيلُهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا ۝

64. Moses said: "That was what
We were seeking after":
So they went back
On their footsteps, following
(The path they had come).

٦٤- قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغُ
فَارْتَدَّا عَلَى اٰثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا ۝

65. So they found one²⁴¹¹
Of Our servants,

٦٥- وَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا

2409. When they came to the Junction of the Seas, Moses forgot about the fish, and his attendant forgot to tell him of the fact that he had seen the fish escaping into the sea in a marvellous way. They passed on, but the stages now became heavier and heavier, and more fatiguing to Moses. So when our old knowledge is exhausted, and we come to the brink of new knowledge, we have a feeling of strangeness, heaviness, and difficulty, especially when we want to pass the new knowledge by and do not make it our own. Some refreshment, even if it be in our old traditional way, is required to sustain us. But we must retrace our steps, and seek the accredited repository of the knowledge which is our quest. It is our business to seek him out. We shall not find him without effort.

2410. The attendant actually saw the fish swimming away in the sea, and yet "forgot" to tell his master. In his case the "forgetting" was more than forgetting. Inertia had made him refrain from telling the important news. In such matters inertia is almost as bad as active spite, the suggestion of Satan. So new knowledge or spiritual knowledge is not only passed by in ignorance, but sometimes by culpable negligence.

2411. *One of Our servants*: his name is not mentioned in the Qur-ān, but Tradition gives it as *Khiḍr*. Round him have gathered a number of picturesque folk-tales, with which we are not here concerned. "*Khiḍr*" means "Green": his knowledge is fresh and green, and drawn out of the living sources of life, for it is drawn from God's own Presence. He is a mysterious being, who has to be sought out. He has the secrets of the paradoxes of Life, which ordinary people do not understand, or understand in a wrong sense, as we shall see further on. The nearest equivalent figure in the literature of the People of the Book is Melchizedek (the Greek form in the New Testament). In Gen. xiv, 18-20, he appears as king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who blesses Abraham, and Abraham gives him tithes. St Paul allegorises him in his Epistle to the Hebrews (v. 6-10; vii. 1-10): "he was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life". That is to say, he appeared mysteriously: his parentage nor his pedigree is known, and he seems to live for all time. These qualities are also attributed to *Khiḍr* in Muslim tradition.

On whom We had bestowed
Mercy from Ourselves
And whom We had taught
Knowledge from Our own ²⁴¹²
Presence.

أَتَيْنَهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا
وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا ○

66. Moses said to him :
" May I follow thee,
On the footing that
Thou teach me something
Of the (Higher) Truth
Which thou hast been taught ?" ²⁴¹³

يَا مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَيْتُكَ
عَلَى أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي
مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رَبُّكَ ○

67. (The other) said : " Verily
Thou wilt not be able
To have patience with me |" ²⁴¹⁴

يَا مُوسَى لَنْ تُصْبِرَ عَلَيَّ
صَبْرًا ○

68. " And how canst thou
Have patience about things
About which thy understanding
Is not complete ?" ²⁴¹⁵

وَكَيْفَ تُصْبِرُ عَلَى
مَا لَمْ تُحِط بِهِ خُبْرًا ○

69. Moses said : " Thou wilt
Find me, if God so will,
(Truly) patient : nor shall I
Disobey thee in aught." ²⁴¹⁶

يَا مُوسَى إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ
صَبْرًا وَلَا أَغْوِيكَ لَكَ أَمْرًا ○

2412. Khidr had two special gifts from God : (1) Mercy from His own Presence, and (2) Knowledge from His own Presence. The first freed him from the ordinary incidents of daily human life ; and the second entitled him to interpret the inner meaning and mystery of events, as we shall see further on. Much could be and has been written about this from the mystic point of view.

2413. Moses, not understanding the full import of what he was asking, makes a simple request. He wants to learn something of the special Knowledge which God had bestowed on Khidr.

2414. Khidr smiles, and says that there will be many things which Moses will see with him, which Moses will not completely understand and which will make Moses impatient. The highest spiritual knowledge often seems paradoxical to those who have not the key to it.

2415. Khidr does not blame Moses. Each one of us can only follow our own imperfect lights best of our judgment, but if we have Faith, we are saved many false steps.

Moses has Faith. He adopts the true attitude of the learner to the Teacher, and promises to follow all things, with the help of God. The Teacher is doubtful, but permits him to follow him in the expectation that he asks no questions about anything until the Teacher himself mentions it

70. The other said : " If then
Thou wouldst follow me,
Ask me no questions
About anything until I
Myself speak to thee
Concerning it."

SECTION 10.

71. So they both proceeded :
Until, when they were
In the boat, he scuttled it.²⁴¹⁷
Said Moses : " Hast thou
Scuttled it in order
To drown those in it ?
Truly a strange thing
Hast thou done ! "
72. He answered : " Did I not
Tell thee that thou canst
Have no patience with me ? "
73. Moses said : " Rebuke me not
For forgetting, nor grieve me
By raising difficulties
In my case."
74. When they proceeded :
Until, when they met
A young man, he slew him.²⁴¹⁸
Moses said : " Hast thou
Slain an innocent person
Who had slain none ?
15 Truly an unheard of thing
30 Hast thou done ! "

٤٠- قَالَ فَإِنْ اتَّبَعْتَنِي
فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى
أُحَدِّثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ۝

٤١- فَأَنْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا
رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا
قَالَ أَخَرَقْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا
لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا ۝

٤٢- قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ
مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ۝

٤٣- قَالَ لَا تَأْتِنِي بِلَايَتِكَ وَ
لَا تُزِيقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي غَمًّا ۝

٤٤- فَأَنْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا لَقِيَا
عُلَمَاءَ فَقَتَلَهُ قَالَ
أَقْتَلْتُ نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ
لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نَكِرًا ۝

2417. The explanation follows in xviii. 79.

2418. The explanation follows in xviii. 80-81.

